

# Animals e men



THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



## Rediscovery of the Red Wolf; Thylacoleo; Suffolk Sea Serpent; Raccoons in the UK

Issue 33

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# *Animals & Men* #33

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# *Animals & Men* #33



## EDITORIAL

jonathan downes



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year – that's right, *Animals & Men* has been going for an entire decade! And there are times when it feels like it.

I am very happy at what we have achieved over the last ten years, and I hope that when – in 2014 – I am writing about our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I shall be able to look back with just as great a feeling of smugness as I do now.

Sadly, however, there are some people within the world of cryptozoology who do not feel as buoyant about the state of the discipline as I do. I am a member of several of the Internet cryptozoological discussion groups, and recently was saddened to see a letter from someone who was announcing his departure in no uncertain terms.

Although he didn't mention any names, he accused the main players in the crypto-universe of being only in it for the money, and of being more interested in cashing cheques than in doing research.

He mentioned no-one by name, and although I have my suspicions that this catalogue of unnamed evil-doers included me, I cannot prove it and don't really care anyway.

However, I would like to put it on record that although the CFZ does indeed make a reasonably large sum of money, every penny that it earns – and more – is spent on cryptozoology.

Neither Richard or I take any money from cryptozoology related earnings, and although we hope that over the next few years we will get bigger and have an even bigger financial turnover, neither of us will benefit personally from it. Indeed we both prop up the CFZ from time to time with our own money.

The CFZ would not exist if it were not for the financial donations of its members, and here I would like to publically thank everyone who has donated time, money and equipment over the last year. However, there is much more still to do, so – once again – I would like to appeal to you all to dig deep in your pockets and help our second decade be as good as our first has been.

Slainté Mhôr

Jon Downes  
(Director, Centre for Fortean Zoology)

*The great days of zoology  
are not done.....*

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*"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)*

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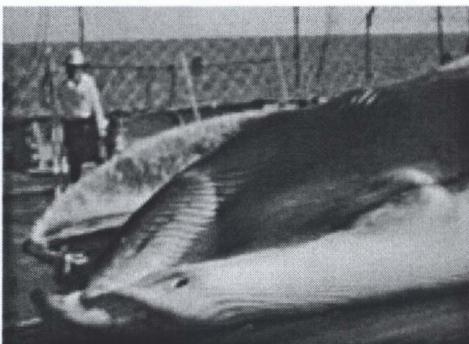
edited and compiled by jon and richard

## NEW AND REDISCOVERED STORIES TO SPOUT ABOUT

Japanese scientists recently announced that they have discovered a new species of Baleen Whale. The Japanese researchers made their discovery through DNA analysis of nine adult whale carcasses. Eight - five females and three males - were killed in 1970, for research, in the eastern Indian Ocean and the Solomon Sea. At the time scientists assumed that they were undersized fin whales.

A ninth whale - a female was killed accidentally in the Sea of Japan in 1998. Fisherman towed it to Tsunoshima Island, where Tadusa Yamada, of the National Science Museum in Tokyo, examined it. Later, he began comparing it with the DNA from the eight animals in the nation's fisheries research collection. The anatomical and molecular comparison took several years to complete.

According to the study, the new species shows several differences from fin whales, including external features, bone structure and DNA. But the researchers named the new species *Balaenoptera omurai*, in honour of the late Japanese whale researcher Dr. Hideo Omura



The new species is smaller than other fin whales - only about 30 feet in length - and has fewer baleen plates. Other scientists - especially in the West - are sceptical. Japan is one of the few nations that still practices commercial whaling, and this would not be the first time that a new species has been named erroneously. The more cynical amongst us remember the discovery of the Pygmy Blue Whale in the 1970s. The 'species' - which turned out not to be a species at all - was merely a cynical attempt by Japanese whaling authorities to circumvent international legislation and hunt individuals which otherwise would be deemed too small for capture.

The DNA evidence also backs taxonomists who have argued that another related species, Eden's whale, is really two separate species, Eden's whale, *B. edeni*, and Bryde's whale, *B. brydei*. So at a stroke, Wada's team boosted the number of *Balaenoptera* species from six to eight.

In other whale related news, the Blue Whale - the largest mammal on the planet - was driven to the edge of extinction by human predation.

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Recently scientists have made an extraordinary discovery in Chile - a hidden nursery where blue whales go in large numbers to rear their young and to feed. They hope that this will prove invaluable in helping researchers understand the behaviour and migration of blue whales, aiding conservation measures. The research team - who have published details of their discovery in the scientific journal *Biology Letters* - claim the area, located in a sheltered network of fjords surrounded by long-dormant volcanoes, is one of the most important blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) feeding and nursing grounds yet discovered in the southern hemisphere.

*"It was amazing to discover something like this in 2003. One thinks this is not an era of discovery, but we still have much to learn,"* marine mammal ecologist Dr Rodrigo Hucke-Gaete, of the Universidad Austral de Chile, told BBC News Online. He added that it was possible that the whales were also giving birth in the area, but there was no evidence currently either way for this. Even at the beginning of the 21st Century - some 300 years after the species was first described - science has practically no information on where blue whales breed, although it is thought to take place in tropical waters. Aerial and marine surveys of the area in 2003 recorded at least 11 mother and calf pairings, suggesting it was indeed being used to rear whale calves.

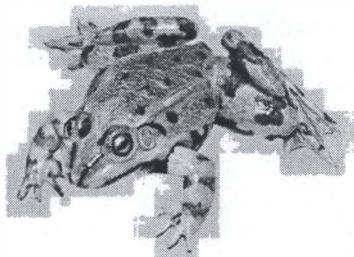
Dr Ken Findlay, of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, a co-author of the research, said the discovery of the site would give scientists easy access to the whales, helping conservation efforts.

Andrew Read, assistant professor of marine conservation biology at Duke University, North Carolina, US, said he would not be surprised if migration patterns of blue whales

were more complex than previously believed, because information on them is partly based on very old research. "If we find large aggregations of blue whales outside their known habitats then that's good news because there are more than we thought," Dr Read added.

The IWC estimates that there could be up to 1,400 individual Southern-Hemisphere blue whales left. This has risen from 500 around a quarter of a century ago, but the recovery has been proceeding slowly.

## IT ISN'T EASY BEING GREEN



The ongoing saga of the British green frogs has taken a new and exciting twist. Although the British herpetofauna has supposedly been catalogued and cast in stone over a century ago, within the past 10 years it has been conclusively proved that the pool frog (*Rana lessonae*), is in fact a bona fide British resident. Now, in a recent issue of the *Herpetological Bulletin*, Julia Wycherley, Simon Doran and Trevor Beebee used sound analysis of male advertisement calls in a study of seven introduced populations of water frogs in Britain. Discriminant analysis of call characters identified five types of water frog, notably *Rana lessonae*, *R. esculenta*, *R. ridibunda*, *R. bergeri* and *R. perezi*. These are the first ever records for the last two species in

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the UK. What is even more exciting is that by their own admission the authors only used this analysis in less than 5% of the known green frog habitats in the UK. It is quite possible that when the other 95% of habitats have been explored that other species will be discovered. It is probable, however, that most - if not all - of these new species will turn out to have been introductions from mainland Europe rather than bona fide British survivors from the Ice Age.

In another exciting development, doubt has once again been cast upon the specific status of the edible frog (*R. esculenta*). Established wisdom is that this is not actually a species in itself, rather a fertile hybrid of interbreeding between *R. lessonae* and *R. ridibunda*. According to most experts on the subject, *R. esculenta* is only ever found alongside viable populations of one or other of the parent species. However, recently a population of the edible frog has been found in southern England which is not concurrent with either *R. lessonae* or *R. ridibunda* which suggests that we have a heck of a lot more to learn about the Species dynamics of the green frog group.

## SPACE RITUAL

NASA scientists have developed a computer modelling programme which has utilised both satellite data and specimen locality data from museum collections (some dating back to the 1800s), to predict successfully the geographic distribution of 11 known chameleon species in Madagascar. The model also helped lead to the discovery of 7 additional chameleon species new to science.

The discovery has amazing implications for the increased knowledge of the Biodiversity of poorly explored regions. NASA satellite data

and data from museum collections can help identify promising places to survey for new species of life, while locating areas likely to be of conservation importance. The results of this NASA-funded study, led by American Museum of Natural History biologist, Christopher J. Raxworthy, Associate Curator, division of Vertebrate Zoology, and six colleagues, demonstrated existing museum collections and satellite measurements of Earth's surface and climate hold great promise for the accurate prediction of species distributions.

This study is the first to successfully predict the distribution of any species in Madagascar using satellite imagery and information from museum specimens.

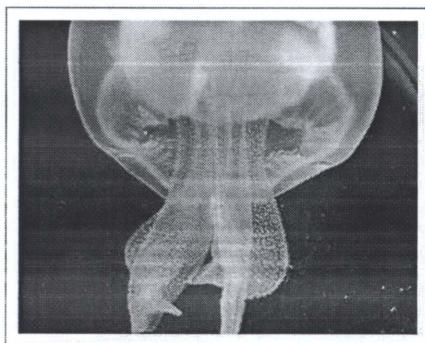
It is also the first to evaluate the predictive usefulness of historical museum specimens in collections (dating back to the 1800s) versus recently collected field data from Madagascar whose terrain of narrow coastal plain, high plateau and central mountains, is home to an extraordinary diverse group of species, making it an excellent location for this type modeling.

The intriguing result that ended up predicting where to locate chameleon species previously unknown to science arose unintentionally. When the researchers examined the models for four species, they found overlapping areas of error about where the models predicted that the species lived. Examining their field data collected in two of these regions, they realized these areas actually contained seven other closely related species that are new to science. The areas that initially seemed to represent "error" in the models pointed to regions that are of importance, because they provide habitats for locally confined species that had been previously unrecognized. Through careful evaluation of their model, the researchers made this serendipitous discovery.

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## DOWN IN MONTEREY

Only a year after having discovered a bizarre new species of jellyfish - known as Big Red because of its striking coloration - which furthermore had short stumpy arms rather than the long flowing Tentacles most usually associated with jellyfish, researchers at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in Moss Landing have discovered another new species of jellyfish that lacks tentacles but has wart-like bumps.



Technically classified as a deep-sea jelly, the animal will be named the . Stellamedusa refers to the creature's trailing arms. They're different from tentacles but reminded scientists of both a shooting star and the Greek goddess with serpent hair. However in the interim before the animal was officially named it was called "Bumpy" by the scientists because of its skin texture.

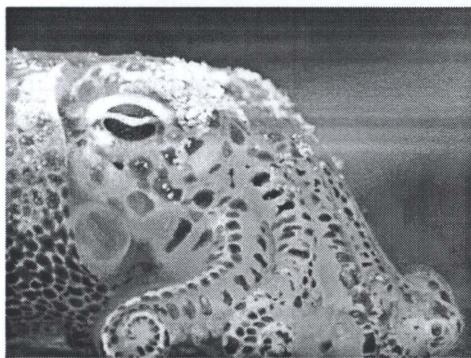
*"Although it's highly unusual for a jelly not to have tentacles, several deep-sea species have evolved this way," said Kevin Raskoff, primary author of the study, reported. "(They) rely on other parts of their body ... to capture prey."*

MBARI scientists first saw the creature in 1991 and have since seen it only six additional

times, but they waited to publish their discovery because they said they wanted to be able to introduce material on its behavior, lifestyle and habitat.

To fully study the "bumpy" jelly, researchers captured one and placed it in a tank with shrimp and pieces of squid. Throughout this observation, they were able to determine the jelly feeds by running into prey, paralyzing it and then slowly ingesting it. Analysts suspect the "bumpy" may eat primarily other jellies. *"You need enough observations to understand the natural variations in the animal's size and shape,"* said George Matsumoto, co-author of the paper on the new jelly. *"We just didn't have enough information to make any general statements about the animal."*

## SEMAPHORE SIGNALS



Yet another new species of squid has been discovered. It is covered with novel reflective plates that form built-in lights that it may use to confuse predators. While other luminous sea creatures are known, the reflective plates on the Hawaiian bobtail squid differ from those of other animals, according to researchers at Kewalo Marine Laboratory, University of Hawaii-

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Manoa.

The light itself is provided by colonies of luminescent bacteria that live on the squids, the researchers report. "Light organs are not uncommon in nature," observed Wendy J. Crookes. "In this one the light organ does have a lens similar to an eye in some respects, but we don't really know its capabilities in terms of specifically directing light. The light is subtle, but it's there. We think it's a counter-predatory camouflage."

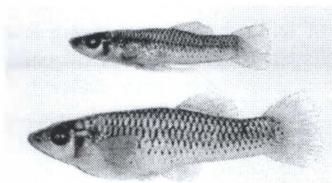
The two- to three-inch squids forage and mate at night and predators that eat them tend to hide in the sand, looking upward.

"We think it projects light down, and that looks like moonlight so the squid doesn't cast a shadow and is not silhouetted against the night sky," Crookes said.

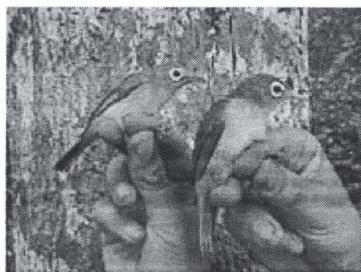
While reflective plates in many aquatic species are formed from chemicals called purines, in this squid they were made from an unusual type of protein the researchers named reflectin. The chemical composition of that tissue is very unusual, agreed Michael Vecchione, director of the National Systematics Laboratory of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The research team is now studying the relationship between the squids and the bacteria that produce the light. The bacteria and squids have a mutually beneficial relationship, Crookes said. Such relationships are common in nature, including beneficial bacteria in the human gut.

## NEW SPECIES ROUNDUP



The San Felipe gambusia (*Gambusia clarkhubbsi*), was discovered in Texas – it is particularly remarkable because the type location – San Felipe Creek – is very well explored, and the fish is said to be common



The bird on the right – from Sulawesi – is either an entirely new species of *zosterops* or white eye, or at the very least a new subspecies or hybrid.



The long legged warbler was thought to have become extinct over a century ago, but recently twelve pairs have been discovered in a remote part of Fiji

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## THAT PETREL EMOTION



Two British men say they have seen a seabird thought to have become extinct more than a century and a half ago. The bird, the New Zealand storm petrel, was spotted a short distance off the country's North Island in November. There had been a possible sighting of the petrel in January 2003, when it was photographed for the first time, though the image is said to be "questionable".

But this time the two Britons say they are in no doubt the bird they sighted really is the one last seen in 1850.

They are Bryan Thomas, a professional bird photographer, and his friend Bob Flood, a writer. Mr Thomas said: "We were in a small boat off Little Barrier Island, not far from Auckland, on 17 November when we saw between 20 and 30 petrels."

Off New Zealand you expect to see two other species, the black-bellied and the white-faced storm petrel. But the bird we saw is really distinctive and different. The underparts are white with a black streak, and the feet project further back than the tail.

There are differences in the detail of the plumage as well. And we were as close as 20 feet (six metres) to them."

## RESURRECTION SHUFFLE

In issue 24 we told how - after years of searching for a rare African primate - anthropologist Scott McGraw and his colleagues believed that the Miss Waldron's red colobus monkey, *Procolobus badius waldroni*, was probably extinct.

But recent hard evidence of the Miss Waldron's red colobus' existence has rekindled McGraw's hopes of finding the primate, reportedly last seen in 1978. Miss Waldron's red colobus is a small, black monkey with reddish fur on its forehead and thighs. Researchers think that these primates once lived in large, noisy packs in the canopy rainforests of eastern Ivory Coast and western Ghana. Current evidence suggests that, if the monkey is still alive, its range may be limited to the remote southeastern corner of Ivory Coast. If the monkey were indeed extinct, it would be the first primate to have disappeared in 200 years. McGraw has spent the better part of a decade traveling to Ivory Coast conducting research on various African monkeys, and always on the lookout for Miss Waldron's red colobus. To date, he has neither seen nor heard one.

Even so, the last few years have yielded some interesting evidence for McGraw. A year ago, he received a photo of what looks like an adult Miss Waldron's red colobus – albeit a freshly killed one. "*This is the only known photograph of a Miss Waldron's red colobus, and it's dead,*" said an exasperated McGraw. "*But everyone who knows anything about this primate says it's definitely a Miss Waldron's.*" Two years ago, an Ivorian hunter gave McGraw the skin of a monkey with reddish markings. The man told McGraw that this monkey had been

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traveling with a pack of black and white colobus monkeys, and that he hadn't seen any other monkeys in the group with reddish markings. The skin is now framed and hangs on the wall in McGraw's Columbus office.

In 2001, again in Ivory Coast, another hunter gave McGraw a black tail from a monkey. Two black-tailed monkey species inhabit the country's southwestern forests. Subsequent DNA testing proved that the tail did indeed come from a red colobus monkey. Ironically, the hunter said he had shot the animal only a week after McGraw had left the country in 2000.

McGraw has not been to Ivory Coast since the winter of 2002. While the country's nine-month civil war was declared over last July, tensions remain high as the country remains politically split. McGraw continues to rely on the Ivorian hunters he knows to keep him informed about sightings of Miss Waldron's red colobus. He's even offered monetary awards to hunters who hear or see the primate.

That relationship is somewhat tenuous. Hunting is illegal in Ivory Coast, but the laws aren't enforced, McGraw said. Bush meat has become something of a delicacy, and many people living in the country's remote areas hunt to eat or sell the meat. Add to that a loss of about 85 percent of the country's original forest cover, and the outlook for Miss Waldron's red colobus doesn't seem very promising.

*"When most of the forest is destroyed and the human population skyrockets and the most remote villages get shotguns, we can't expect to have a good number of these primates around, but if this monkey is extinct, then something has gone very, very wrong, as primates are pretty resilient."*

## **ASSORTED CRYPTIDS**

### **FRAGRANT FLOWER STINKS**

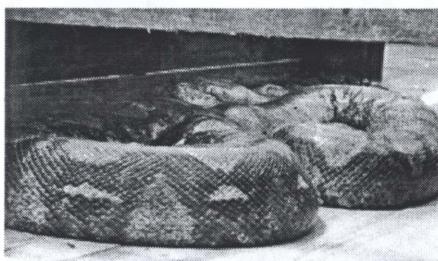
Two days before the end of 2003, zoologists across the world were excited by the news that a massive python - allegedly almost 15 metres (49 feet) in length and weighing a staggering 447 kilograms (985 pounds), had been captured in Indonesia. "Fragrant Flower", a reticulated python had allegedly been captured in 1992 on the island of Sumatra, and was being exhibited in a tiny zoo in Curugsewu village on the island of Java. According to the Guinness World Records, the longest discovered snake was also a reticulated python from Indonesia. It was 10 metres (33 feet) long when found in Sulawesi island in 1912. In 1992 Samantha, a snake measuring eight metres and which was dubbed the largest in captivity, died in the Bronx Zoo in New York. Samantha came from Indonesia's side of Borneo island.



There have, of course, been rumours of larger snakes in the wilder parts of the world for many years. Our very own Richard Freeman - for example - went to Thailand in the year 2000 in

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the search of a semi mythical giant snake called the Naga, which he believes may be a surviving remnant of an ancient family of giant snakes called madsoiids, which grew up to 100 feet in length. Nevertheless, a python of nearly 50 ft in length ain't to be sneezed at, and for about a week the herptological world was agog with excitement. Over the next few days more details began to filter through to the West. The minutiae surrounding this enormous snake were leapt upon by the eager press as if they were the latest escapades of Brittany Spears:



- \* The snake was so big that it needed 65 men and the blessing of a tribal leader to snare it.
- \* The snake prefers to eat four fierce brown dogs every month. (Refusing dogs of a different hue by some accounts)
- \* The snake was so large that four metres reportedly had to be severed after a rotten deer was found undigested in its stomach. (Make of that what you will).



Then, on the 6th January it was all over. The Guardian sent in someone brandishing a tape

measure, and "Fragrant Flower" was reduced to a paltry 6.5-7 m (23 feet), and a pitiful 100m. Nevertheless great snake watchers should not despair. Richard Freeman is confident that as well as surviving madsoiids, there may be giant anacondas reaching a length of fifty or sixty feet, and that the claimed length for "Fragrant Flower" is not impossible for a reticulated python. They just haven't caught it yet!

## CROCODILE ROCK

In recent months the news media in Hong Kong has been gripped by the ongoing saga of the hunt for a crocodile which had been reported in muddy marshes near what was once the border between the former British colony and mainland China. Not unsurprisingly all attempts to catch the beast have failed. Even John Lever (61) a professional crocodile hunter from Australia has been unsuccesful. 0

The presence of some 600 spectators and 200 journalists had helped thwart his efforts, according to Mr Lever. *"We damn near had it on the first night... I was just about to grab it and the spotlights turned on... the croc took one look at me, and hid,"* Mr Lever told the BBC's World Today. He said that the marshy terrain had also proved an obstacle, with soupy mud that is impossible to walk through, but an easy swim for the crocodile. Mr Lever has been training local officials in the art of trapping so that they can take over the hunt. But Mr Lever was sceptical about their chances. *"They've got no experience in hunting, they're handlers,"* he said. *"If they do catch the croc, I'll see that I've played a part in that and I'll be very happy,"* he said.

It has been hypothesised that it is on the run from a mainland crocodile farm, or a home where it was kept as a pet. However there is a far more exciting possibility. Hong Kong has been visited by crocodiles before. In 1917 an

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Indopacific crocodile was caught in territorial waters off Lantau Island. Hong Kong is thousands of miles from the main habitat of these animals but they are notoriously good swimmers and have been caught as far afield as New Zealand and southern Japan. If the latest crocodilian visitor to Hong Kong is one of these magnificent beasts then we strongly urge that it should be left to its own devices and protected under the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Protection of Wild Animals Ordinance.

The most recent issue of *Porcupine!* – the journal of the Ecology and Biodiversity Department of Hong Kong University confirms our suggestion that the animal is indeed *C. porosus* but the saga continues - the rogue reptile has been named Hong Kong's "Personality of the Year". The 1.5-metre crocodile, believed to be an escaped pet, beat a host of politicians and celebrities to win the contest on government-run radio station RTHK.

## CROCODILE CAPERS

The Indo-Pacific crocodile can reach a length of 9 meters or more and has the greatest range of any crocodilian. German Traveller Englebert Kaempfer was shown sacred dragons kept in Japanese temples in 1690. His description of them sounds very like Indo-Pacific crocodiles. In Southern China this species was known as the "flood dragon", perhaps because flood waters brought it into areas of human habitation. The *taniwha*, a water dragon in Maori lore is probably based on a crocodile. The Hawian islanders have dragon lore as well. *Kihawhine* was probably based on ancestral stories of crocodiles. RF

WAXWYRM



Is this a priceless  
cryptozoological specimen?  
Or is it an exquisite fake?

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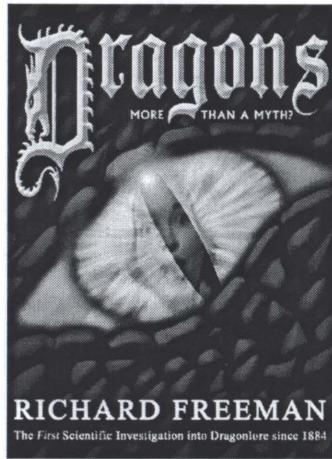
## PICKLED PRODIGY

This alleged preserved baby dragon was uncovered in the garage of David Hart in Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire. It is about a metre long. Hart's grandfather Fredrick (a porter) was given it in the 1890s after the Natural History Museum rejected it. It was sent to them from Germany.

It is probably an exquisite fake made from rubber or wax. David intends to have a biopsy run on the little dragon just in case it is real.

It is far more convincing than other fake dragons, usually made from crudely altered rays whose fins have been cut to look like legs and wings.

It would be fantastic if it turned out to be genuine, especially as my book "Dragons More Than a Myth" is due out this summer! RF



## LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS

## SOMNULENT SHARKS SQUID SNACKS

A little known shark that lives in waters off Antarctica is only the second creature known to science that hunts giant squid for food claims scientists. Sleeper sharks even appear to target the biggest species of large squid - the colossal squid, which is about double the size of the shark. Until now it was thought that the sperm whale was the only animal thought to predate on these two enormous cephalopods.

When French marine biologists opened the stomachs of 36 sleeper sharks accidentally killed by trawlers, in the Southern Ocean in waters off the Kerguelen island archipelago, they collected the remains of at least 49 colossal squid and eight giant squid. The sharks feed on giant squid of different sizes from juveniles until adults. Yves Cherel, Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chize The research was conducted by Yves Cherel, of the Centre d'Etudes Biologiques de Chize in Villiers-en-Bois, France, and Guy Duhamel of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

Giant squid (*Architeuthis dux*) and their even bigger relatives colossal squid (*Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*) are amongst the most mysterious and fascinating creatures in the ocean. Virtually nothing is known of their behaviour, because they have never been observed in their natural habitat. They live in pitch darkness at an ocean depth of up to 600

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metres - which is about 350 m deeper than the average operating depth of a submarine.

*"We think both the sharks and the giant squid live at the same depths," Dr Cherel said. "The sharks feed on giant squid of different sizes from juveniles until adults."*

Most of what we know about the biology of these large squid comes from dead specimens caught in trawler nets or washed up on beaches. The giant squid grows up to 12 m (39 feet) in length, though most of this is made up of its two long front tentacles. The colossal squid may grow up to 14 m (46 feet) or more. Sleeper sharks can grow up to 7.3 m (24 feet).

Since large squid tend to dwarf sleeper sharks, the researchers are at a loss to explain how the sharks catch such big prey, especially as they appear to devour even bigger squid on average than those eaten by sperm whales.

## BUT IS IT ART?

A mysterious creature has been reported in Lake Merritt, near Oakland, California. It can't be positively identified but is certainly something to deal with, but no-one knows where it came from or what it is. Dick Bailey, the Lakekeeper and marine biologist, has pulled out just about everything from the 140-acre lake in the years he has been taking care of Lake Merritt. Too often, the lake is used as a dump for unwanted garbage.

Pulling such junk from the lake is the continuous process of keeping it clean that Bailey and his volunteer groups perform with such devotion. Once in a while, Bailey finds something in the lake that astounds him. But recently, he ran across something so unusual he is at a loss to describe it.

"It" is estimated at 6-feet-long with a large head and prominent nostrils and popping eyes. Its skin is rough and bumpy. Probably it has a tail and four short legs. You understand why it is mistakenly called a crocodile.

In his monthly newsletter, Bailey writes: *"Please don't feed the crocodile. He's big. He's blue. And he (she?) is in Lake Merritt. You can see it across the lake from the broken down dock by the Lake Merritt Hotel. First found trying to crawl up an old wall, it was recently noted out in deeper water. Of course it is not an alligator. They don't live in salt water. How he got here we haven't a clue. Maybe he swam in from the Berkeley shoreline."*

At first, apparently, the object was so mobile, it was believed to be a creature from the deep. But after a few days, people began to speculate that "it" was something created by a human, possibly an artist, who wanted to decorate the lake with an outdoor sculpture.

If so, he or she (the artist) should have made it of something more durable than papier-mache, or other material that would hold up in the salt water that comes from San Francisco Bay.

## LOVE NESS THAN ZERO: NO LIMIT

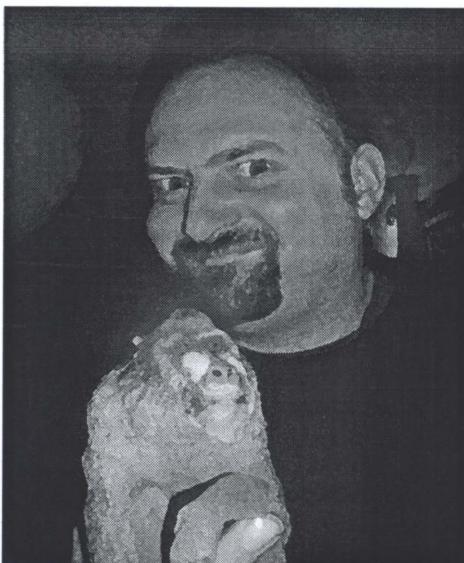
An American film producer is planning to make what has been described as the "quintessential Loch Ness Monster story". Philadelphia author Steve Alten's seventh novel, *The Loch*, is set to be made into a horror movie by David Foster, producer of films including *The Mask of Zorro*, according to an announcement on the writer's official website. The best-selling fiction author said a manuscript for the film had been finished and he was hoping to finalise a studio and publishing deal shortly. Alten stated: *"The manuscript is finished, and those who've read it*

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*believe it to be the quintessential Loch Ness Monster story, heavily researched, backed by real science, wrapped around a page-turning plot."*

Alten's first best-selling novel, *Meg*, about a 65ft prehistoric shark prowling the modern day seas, sold more than one million copies worldwide and The Loch is expected to hit book stores early next year. The news team for this magazine only have one question to ask on the subject. As it is obvious no cryptozoological movie could be made without the presence of two of the world's leading cryptozoologists, can Hugh Grant put on a few extra pounds and play Jon and Johnny Depp lose a bit of hair and play Richard?

## **And finally Richard....**



## **NINETY-NINE DEAD BABOONS**

Dutch authorities are trying to track down who left a foul-smelling suitcase at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport containing up to 2,000 decomposing baboon noses.

The gruesome discovery was made by security guards during a routine patrol in early September. Officials say the bizarre shipment was brought from Nigeria and was destined for the United States. Baboons are protected under international conventions and their body parts cannot be exported without authorisation.

*"The stench from the luggage drew the attention of the security staff,"* Louis Steens of the Dutch Agriculture Ministry's Inspection Service said.

Louis Steen's Sniffer dogs were used to locate the suspect suitcase in the packed left-luggage area, he said. *"It's not unusual to find animal organs, such as eyes and brains or plants in baggage from Asia and Africa - whose people use them as ingredients of their traditional medicines for healing purposes,"* Mr Steens said.

But, he said, they had never come across such an enormous number of baboon noses. *"It's weird! It's a health hazard too,"* he said. The Dutch authorities say they have contacted their counterparts in Nigeria and Cites to assist with their investigations.

The noses, weighing a total of around 30 kilograms (66 lbs), have been destroyed.

According to Mr Freeman, wit of this parish, *"for the Customs officers it was one of the high dramas (*hydramus geddit?*) of the year"*. We promptly punched him and went down the pub instead.

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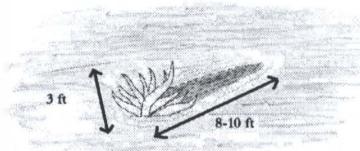
## THE STRANGE STORY OF THE SUFFOLK HORSE-EEL

Some months ago we were contacted by a man called Mr. Pickard, who lives in Bury St Edmunds. He has asked us not to identify him further and bearing in mind the extraordinary story that he had to tell it is hard to blame him.

Apparently on the evening of 10th October 1997 he had been night fishing on the beach at the little seaside town of Aldeborough in Suffolk. To his chagrin he found that there were already fishermen sitting in his favourite spot close to the public toilets by the beach, so he was forced to move further along the beach where he set up his equipment on the edge of the water.

There was a partial full moon, but there were no fish biting. At about 2 am he loaded up his hook, baited it and went down the shingle to cast off. There had been a storm previously and the shingle had been thrown up high on the beach by the force of the waves. Although

he had been spectacularly unlucky with fish there were large numbers of peeler crabs in the sea that night and Mr Pickard has speculated since that it was this abundant supply of crustacean protein that had attracted the creature that he saw next.



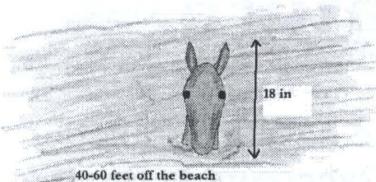
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Much to his amazement he saw what he has had thought was a tree-trunk floating in the water. At one end there was a tangled mass of what he thought were roots. It was only when the mysterious object started bobbing up and down and moving against the swell of the tide that you realised that there was one important thing along with his original theory: floating tree-trunks can't swim.

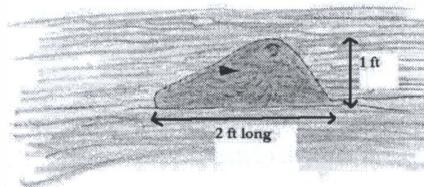
Suddenly he realised that what he was looking at was actually a strange creature bobbing up and down in the water leaving waves of circular ripples. What he had originally thought were roots were actually part of the animal, and when we met a few weeks ago he told me that he hypothesised that they were some sort of horny growth. About 8-10 feet of the creature was visible. Much to his surprise, and somewhat to his dismay, the creature turned at a right angle and began to swim inshore towards him. He saw what he thought looked like the head off a horse, and he rationalised that somehow it was indeed a horse that had been washed overboard in the recent storms.

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thought it was a horse and he was looking for a rope that he could use as a makeshift halter, so he could prepare to get it on land and phone the RSPCA, and when it turned parallel to the beach, and he realised that not an only was it not a horse, but it was something that he had never seen before or since. It put its ears back at 45-degree angle and disappeared from sight beneath the water.



about 25 ft from shore



Mr. Pickard came back up the beach, looked back, and it had gone. Over the next few weeks and months he told a few people at work, but it was only when - by accident - he read about similar sightings of creatures called horse eels across north-western Europe that he began to throw himself into the quest for the truth behind his sighting.

Horse eels are semi mythical creatures which have been seen for centuries mainly along the west coast of Ireland, but which occasionally enter freshwater. Many researchers have linked these huge, anguilliform creatures, with bushy manes, with sightings of what Belgian cryptozoologist; Bernard Heuvelmans called "Merhorses". These are long-necked marine creatures with horse-like manes, which have been reported from oceans across the world.

Heuvelmans speculated that these were mammal course - a hitherto unsuspected species of long necked pinniped. Other researchers believe them to be a weird fish, and it has to be said that Mr Pickard believes that the animal that he saw was actually a reptile. His sighting does, indeed, sound very similar to many sightings of horse eels, and indeed which can be found in the ever-growing library of books written about mystery animals and the sea. However, the weird horns - if they were horns - are unprecedented, at least in my experience. It must be said though, that having met Mr Pickard, I am impressed by the level of his credibility. I would stake my professional reputation that, whereas his interpretation of events may be at fault, he saw exactly what he says he saw.





### Do we have a population of Raccoons in Great Britain?

by Chris Moiser

A few years ago I was asked what animals I thought could become established in the United Kingdom over the next ten years and I, rashly, after about 20 seconds thought, suggested Siberian Chipmunks. This was partly because of the large numbers in the pet trade, and because they are natural escape artists.

It was not long afterwards that I re-read the paper by Simon Baker in *Mammal Review* (Baker, S.J. 1990, 93). He reviewed the keeping of exotic mammals in Britain and the number of escapes that had occurred and been reported. In a final sentence in the discussion he referred to the then current UK legislation and suggested that if it was not effective that we would be likely to see new species of exotic mammals become established in Britain. The two species that he suggested would become established were Raccoons and Wild Boar; as Oscar Wilde once said, "*I wish I had said that*".

Since he wrote the paper the situation with Wild Boar has become such that the prophecy was clearly fulfilled with them having become established in some areas as a result of escapes from farms. The situation with raccoons was, and is less clear. Baker's data suggested that in 1988 there were 37 raccoons held by 19

private owners. These were the animals that were licensed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, in addition there would be a number of animals in zoos, and an unknown number being illegally kept.

Baker recorded that there had been 22 findings of them out of captivity between January 1970 and October 1989. A particular cluster occurred in 1984 when six animals were captured at various locations. It was not known where four of these six came from. It was suggested that these were deliberate releases, because it was in 1984 that the Dangerous Wild Animal Act was first reviewed, and the raccoon, and several other "lesser carnivores" added to the original list of animals that Parliament considered to be dangerous. Owners were given 90 days to licence their animals or dispose of them.

A later report on the workings and possible review of the Act published in 2001 (Greenwood et al. 2001) disclosed 30 licensed raccoons in England Wales, as a result of a questionnaire sent to all 410 local authorities. One of the bodies consulted by Greenwood's team about possible reviews to the Act was the National Association of Private Animal Keepers (NAPAK). They made it clear that many of their members would not have licensed their animals as they believed that there was no scientific rationale whatsoever in adding the animals to the schedule of dangerous wild animals in 1984. Interestingly Greenwood's report suggests that in any new review of the Act Raccoons be removed from the list of Dangerous Wild Animals, on the grounds that they are not particularly dangerous.

There seems little doubt that raccoons could survive here once they became properly established. They come from a temperate climate, but with ranges that extend into the arctic in one direction and tropical climes in the other. In addition they have existed in mainland Europe since the 1930s. Originally 2 pairs were

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released in Germany in 1934, but 100 more pairs were released during the second world war when a stray bomb hit a fur farm near Berlin. The numbers have increased tremendously and they are now spreading into neighbouring countries (and possibly as far as Spain). As the numbers increase though so does the damage as some individuals become urbanised. Homes are regularly entered through cat flaps in the search for food, and much collateral damage then occurs. One German expert suggested that the only way to keep them out of houses was to play loud heavy-metal music from loudspeakers in the roof space twenty-four hours a day (Spinks, 2002).

3200 raccoons were also released into Russia at some time between 1925 and 1944 in an attempt to enhance local hunting. These became successfully established (Baker, S.J. 1986, 200). Although farmed for their fur in Europe I can find no records of them being farmed for their fur in England or Wales, although whilst searching I did find a record of skunks being farmed at Teigncombe in Devon in the 1920s (Agricultural Correspondent 1922). A colony of Raccoons is reported to have survived from the 1950s until at least the 1970s just north of Glasgow Zoo, in the Baillieston area, following an escape from the zoo. The animals were occasionally reported as scavenging form bins, but appeared not to have attempted to enter homes.

The situation in the United Kingdom is that officially they are not here, but they do keep on being found, in areas where there are few if any licensed animals, and where no one claims them when they are captured. Also because they are not spectacularly large animal and are not realistically considered to be dangerous to the public the reports of their discovery tend to be restricted to local newspapers only.

When I started the literature search I was amazed to find that the first one "found wild" in the United Kingdom, was actually shot in 1848, near Tamworth (anon. 1849). The suggestion, I suspect correctly, was that it had escaped from a travelling menagerie. A similar suggestion also occurs in the frustratingly undated "*Cassell's Popular Natural History*", in this case the animal was captured alive in Dorset and rapidly became a pet. The book has the appearance of being from the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.

The more recent captures and observations are more interesting because of the obvious absence of travelling menageries and indeed the apparent absence of that many raccoons in captivity generally outside zoos. I first became aware of a raccoon being captured in the South West of England at some time prior to 1994 when an animal was detained in a pantry it had entered in the Cornish town of Launceston. This animal was subsequently placed at Newquay Zoo. Although reported at the time I cannot, for the life of me, find the clipping. I remember that it was since the species was listed as dangerous wild animals, but it must have been before 1994 as that was when Newquay Zoo was taken over by Mike Thomas. Mike was able to tell me about the other two raccoons, that the zoo was given when he was there, but not about this one, suggesting that it would have been before his time. Enquiries in the area had confirmed that it had not escaped from a licensed keeper.

*The Daily Mirror* in August 1997 reported the capture of a raccoon in Stepaside, Pembrokeshire that had been seen in the area for the previous 18 months. It had been attacking domestic poultry and was thought to have originated from a local wildlife park, but was eventually sent to London Zoo after recapture.

In 1998 a raccoon was seen helping itself to fish from a pond in Exwick, Exeter over several

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nights. The owner managed to take a photograph of him, and he was subsequently caught in a livetrap using a kipper as bait. This animal was handed over to Newquay Zoo where he joined their colony for a few days before wandering off again. He became known as Randy and was something of a local celebrity because of his escapes and liking for roast potatoes, that he used to eat on a bird table that belonged to a women whom he regularly visited whilst "awol".

May 2002 saw the RSPCA animal collection officer Jamie Davey summoned to a farm near Padstow where a raccoon was detained in the chicken coop. This animal was subsequently deposited at Newquay Zoo, where he was named "Chuck".

In August 2002 the village of Meltham, near Huddersfield in Yorkshire suffered a series of attacks on domestic pets at night. At least two rabbits and two guinea pigs were killed before the animal was identified according to *The Huddersfield Examiner* on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The RSPCA reported that they had found a number of raccoons living on a local farm where they were feeding on domestic poultry. The report failed to state the actual number or whether they had been captured.

The *Nottingham Evening Post* of August 30<sup>th</sup> 2003 reported the capture of a raccoon in Bingham after it killed a pet rabbit. A week later the *Lincolnshire Echo* reported another raccoon being photographed in the Village of Thorpe on the Hill two months after it had first been seen in the area. The Bingham animal was taken to the Exotic Animal Refuge at Peterborough which is run by a Mrs. Mansfield. When I spoke to her she indicated that she had been called out to, and caught, another raccoon about 10 to 12 years previously.

Bushby, Leicester was the next reported sighting in November when a retired GP saw a racoon on his bird table eating peanuts. To confirm the animals identity and existence he took some good quality video tape of it. Twycross zoo curator Neil Dorman confirmed that he wasn't aware of any reports of other raccoons in the area, but that colleagues around the country had occasionally come across reports of them. In fact Chris Mullins, a big cat researcher, on his website, records receiving a report of an animal resembling a racoon being seen in the Loughborough area of Leicestershire on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2000.

The latest raccoon to be captured in Cornwall was caught at Paul near Penzance by an RSPCA officer with a dogcatcher (a long pole with a lasso type loop on the end – not a local authority employee). The animal had been seen in the area for the previous three weeks or so. Its capture was reported in the *Western Morning News* on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2003, but no date for the actual capture was given.

## Discussion

The number of captures and sightings of raccoons is increasing, and despite the necessity of a licence to keep the species the captured/recaptured animals are not being returned to owners, nor are prosecutions for keeping raccoons without a licence occurring.

The finding of three animals in the County of Cornwall, albeit almost twenty years apart and across a distance of over 60 miles (from Launceston to Penzance) must raise some questions. If each was an escaped illegal (i.e. unlicensed) animal then either, they are all escaping, or there are a large number of unlicensed animals in the county with escapes being only an occasional occurrence. Obviously the escape of an unlicensed animal is unlikely to be reported for fear of prosecution and penalty,

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which could include seizure of any other unlicensed animals that the keeper still has.

Similarly the capture of one animal, and the existence of at least one other in the Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln triangle must suggest either a small wild-living group or regular escapes there.

The possibility of a large number of unlicensed animals in captivity seems unlikely because of the relatively slow rate at which they breed. Additionally either regular escapes of animals, or an escape of several animals would be needed in order for a population to become established. If the two recent captures, at Paul and Padstow, are part of a contiguous population then there could be a modestly sizeable population present. If they are escaped animals it would suggest at least two unlicensed private keepers, or one who moved in the intervening two years and whose cage security hasn't improved much since the first escape.

If one or more of the "Cornwall three" are wild born animals that are the descendants of animals released when the law was changed in 1984, this suggests an established breeding population because wild raccoons are usually only thought to live to be about five years of age (Nowak, R, and Paradiso, J, 1983, 981). The fact that they are more nocturnal than diurnal and favour woodland near water may have kept the founder population from being seen and reported, until individuals either moved out of the area or humans moved in. With "the Cornwall three" it would seem to be the latter, as all three came to the attention of the authorities through their encroachment into the urban environment. Similarly the Exeter animal was trapped because it was taking fish from a domestic garden. Had these animals not moved into urban areas it seems they may have

survived unnoticed for the rest of their natural lives.

Whilst there is insufficient evidence to prove that the various captures around Great Britain show the existence of a surviving viable wild population of raccoons, they are suggestive of such. An alternative explanation would be to suggest that there is a reasonable population of unlicensed captive animals from which there are occasional escapes or releases. Should the species be removed from the schedule of animals requiring licensing under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act it will be interesting to see if a number of private owners who are currently unlicensed will identify themselves.

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## MONSTERS AND THE MILITARY

On the weekend of 14-16 November 2003 myself and your esteemed editor (plus Britain's leading fence-jumper, bunker-buster and crop circle maker, Matthew Williams) both spoke at a UFO conference just outside of Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. You might wonder: what on earth does that have to do with cryptozoology and why is this piece of news appearing in a magazine devoted to the study of unknown animals?

Well, many of you will be aware that Jon has written extensively on the issue of "zooforms" and has demonstrated how, in a surprisingly high number of incidents, links can be made between cryptozoology, seemingly paranormal phenomena, mysterious creatures and the UFO subject. A perfect case in point being the infamous Rendlesham Forest "UFO Landing" affair of December 1980 in Suffolk, England. While the incident (or incidents) has been dissected almost to the point of becoming tedious, few will be aware that Rendlesham

Forest also has a long history of being the location for a whole host of cryptozoological encounters, including phantom black dogs, big cats and the Shug Monkey - a weird creature described as half ape and half giant dog.

It was with these links in mind that Jon delivered a fine lecture at the Nevada gig on the issue of -- and links between -- animal mutilations in Puerto Rico, the Chupacabras' bloodsucking attacks on livestock in the area, alleged UFO crashes in broadly the same location and a whole range of related conspiracy theories. And having spent a lengthy amount of time rampaging around the Puerto Rican countryside in 1998 (with sidekick Graham Inglis and at the expense of Channel 4 Television), Jon certainly knows his stuff.

But in addition to the genuinely bizarre and not completely understood links between UFOs, alleged cover-ups and zooform phenomena, there appears to be something else going on too that involves cryptozoology, mutilations, and conspiracy theories but from a distinctly different perspective. By that I mean that documented examples are beginning to surface demonstrating that the US Government has actively, on several occasions at least, promoted and even "staged" cryptozoological mysteries and mutilation events for bizarre, psychological warfare purposes, as I will now demonstrate.

Of the many and varied tools of warfare that were employed on battlefields throughout the world in the 20th Century, few were as strange as those officially proposed for use by the United States Army in the mid-1960's. While the conventional weapons of war will always have their place, some within the military at the time were studying truly groundbreaking and bizarre ways of defeating the enemy -- including employing the use of vampires, bloodsucking monsters, "eerie creatures," and beasts that could accurately be described as half-man and half-ape.

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As startling as this may sound, evidence is available that supports this highly unusual and controversial scenario. But what was it that prompted the military to initiate such studies in the first place? To answer that question it becomes necessary to take a look at the life and career of one Edward Lansdale.

Major General Edward G. Lansdale was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1908, the second of the four sons of Sarah Frances Philips of California and Henry Lansdale of Virginia. During the Second World War, Lansdale served with the Office of Strategic Services and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the US Army in 1943, serving in various military intelligence assignments throughout the war. After several wartime promotions, in 1945 Lansdale was transferred to Headquarters Air Forces Western Pacific in the Philippines, where he became chief of the Intelligence Division and extended his tour until 1948.

During this period, Lansdale helped the Philippine Army rebuild its intelligence services, was responsible for the disposition of unresolved cases of large numbers of prisoners of war involving many nationalities, and conducted numerous studies to assist the US and Philippines Governments in learning the effects of the Second World War on the Philippines. He was commissioned a captain in the regular US Air Force in 1947, with the temporary rank of major; and after leaving the Philippines in 1948, he served as an instructor at the Strategic Intelligence School, Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, where he received a temporary promotion to lieutenant colonel in 1949.

In 1953 Lansdale became a member of General J.W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniell's mission to the French forces in Indo-China, acting as an advisor on special counter-guerrilla operations. After returning to further duties in

the Philippines, he was transferred to Saigon, where he served until the end of 1956. During this period, Lansdale helped advise the Vietnamese Armed Forces and the Vietnamese Government on numerous internal Security problems, including the pacification campaigns of 1954-55, as well as psychological operations, intelligence the integration of sect armies, civic action, and the refugee program.

In June 1957, after brief staff duty with USAF Headquarters, Lansdale was transferred to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, with duties as Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. Two years later, Lansdale served on the staff of the President's Committee on Military Assistance - the Draper Committee. He was given a temporary promotion to brigadier general in April 1960; and on 24 February 1961, he was appointed Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, where his primary duties focused on attention to special operations of an extremely sensitive nature.

Among his decorations were the Distinguished Service Medal awarded by the Air Force for his work in Indo-China during the period 1954 to 1956, the National Security Medal awarded by the National Security Council for his service in the Philippines during the period 1950 to 1953, the Philippine's Legion of Honor, and the Philippine's Medal of Military Merit.

Back in the 1950s, at the personal request of President Elpidio Quirino, Lansdale was transferred to the Philippines-based Joint United States Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG), to advise the intelligence services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that were then faced with a serious threat to national security posed by the Communist Huks. Ramon Magsaysay had just been appointed Secretary of National Defense and Lansdale was made liaison officer to Secretary Magsaysay for JUSMAG. The two

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became intimate friends, frequently visiting the combat areas together. Lansdale helped the Philippine Armed Forces develop psychological operations, civic actions, and the rehabilitation of Huk prisoners.

While involved in the campaign against the Huks, Lansdale helped create an ingenious military and intelligence operation that utilized for psychological warfare purposes, a local and much feared legend: that of the terrifying Asuang Vampire.

*"To the superstitious," wrote Lansdale, "the Huk battleground was a haunted place filled with ghosts and eerie creatures. A combat psywar squad was brought in. It planted stories among town residents of an Asuang living on the hill where the Huks were based. Two nights later, after giving the stories time to make their way up to the hill camp, the psywar squad set up an ambush along the trail used by the Huks. When a Huk patrol came along the trail, the ambishers silently snatched the last man of the patrol, their move unseen in the dark night. They punctured his neck with two holes, vampire-fashion, held the body up by the heels, drained it of blood, and put the corpse back on the trail. When the Huks returned to look for the missing man and found their bloodless comrade, every member of the patrol believed that the Asuang had got him and that one of them would be next if they remained on that hill. When daylight came, the whole Huk squadron moved out of the vicinity."* Lansdale died in 1987.

Whether vampires are a physical reality or myth and fantasy is hardly the point. The communist Huks certainly believed in the reality of the Asuang vampire and it was this belief that allowed US and Philippine forces to gain strategic ground in their conflict with the Huks without even firing a shot.

Almost certainly, the significance of this incident was not lost on Pentagon strategists since studies into the exploitation of similar legends, superstitions and fears of a supernatural nature for military purposes were addressed by the US Army on a variety of occasions in the years that followed. And it must also be said that were it not for the fact that the facts pertaining to the Ausang caper have now surfaced, the "vampire" incident might have been considered a classic mutilation event along the lines of the Chupacbras - particularly in light of the fact that the killing occurred in a forest and the unfortunate victim was drained of blood via two small puncture holes. It has to be said that this is strikingly similar to modern-day cases in Puerto Rico attributed to the Chupacbras.

I referred to the above in my most recent book, *Strange Secrets: Real Government Files on the Unknown*; and since publication of the book last May, two former US Army psychological warfare operatives that worked heavily in Vietnam in the mid-to-late 1960s have come forward with an intriguing account -- very similar to that of Major Edward Lansdale - concerning their personal involvement in another such incident. According to the men, this involved the careful dissemination to certain North Vietnamese troops in 1967 of a bogus story that there were (to quote the sources directly) "*a tribe of wild, hairy men*" living deep in the jungles of Vietnam that would feed on the blood of any and all people that were unfortunate to cross their paths. They too allude to the fact that the bodies of at least two North Vietnamese personnel were "*mutilated in a way that would appear to their people they were killed by the wild men.*"

As with the situation in the Philippines more than a decade before, this had the desired effect of terrifying the North Vietnamese personnel, who exited the area in question with haste. This, of course, was precisely the desired result and it

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subsequently allowed US and South Vietnamese personnel to secure the territory in question without direct confrontation.

Faced with this, we need to ask: how many other reports of "wild, hairy men," and seemingly unknown mutilations (whether of people or animals) might in fact have had their origins in obscure, military psychological warfare operations such as this, instead of in the world of the unexplained, the paranormal or even cryptozoology?

On another topic: for years there have been dark stories in circulation about strange creatures and devolved people inhabiting the lower levels of the London Underground rail system. Writer Michael Gross discussed this at length in his article *Going Underground - Rumours of London's Lost Cannibals*, in issue 105 of *Fortean Times*. Similarly, in a fictional format the films *An American Werewolf in London* and 2002's *Reign of Fire* (not, it must be said, one of Richard Freeman's favourite films) also portrayed encounters with dragons and werewolves in the maze of tunnels under London. Well, now it can be said that there is some truth to this scenario.

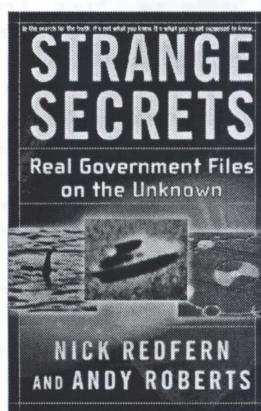
Well, okay, maybe I'm exaggerating things a little bit, but on 17 December 2003 it was revealed by the US media that something unusual was afoot in the Washington D.C. Subway Station. Something was on the prowl...

Okay, okay, perhaps I'm exaggerating again by using the word prowl! However, a videotape released on the day in question by Metrorail, Washington's mass transit system, clearly shows a deer running through a train station as startled passengers watched. "We've named him *Rudolph the Blue Line Reindeer*," Metro spokeswoman Lisa Farbstein said.

The video also shows the deer walking around the mezzanine at the Addison Road-Seat Pleasant station in Maryland, running down an escalator, then darting down the platform past a waiting train. The animal then jumps onto the tracks, avoiding the electrified third rail, and heads off into the woods surrounding the above ground station, Farbstein said. Deer often wander onto Metro's aboveground tracks, and most avoid danger, Farbstein added, but a deer inside a station is rare.

Metro spokesman Steven Taubenkibel said officials were unsure of the exact date of the incident. Security cameras caught the romp, however, and police came across it during a routine review of video footage. It will surely only be a matter of time before a large black cat with glowing red eyes puts in an appearance on London's Bakerloo Line...

Anyone with data pertinent to stories of weird beasties seen on London's Underground rail system can contact Nick Redfern at the CFZ US Office at [skywatcher4u@aol.com](mailto:skywatcher4u@aol.com). He is putting together a paper on this very subject for the CFZ that we hope to publish later this year.



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The CFZ Big Cat Study Group is going from strength to strength, largely through the sterling efforts of Mark Fraser. In the last issue we printed his account of the vigil which he organised in Lincolnshire back in November. It is very heartening to be able to report that finally he succeeded in his long-term aim of seeing one of Britain's big cats. If anybody deserves to - he does.

Many of you will remember that in the previous issue we advertise the 2004 Yearbook as containing Mark Fraser's complete run-down of every big cat sightings known to us during the year of 2003. When it finally arrived, it was far too big to fit into the book, so we took the unprecedented step of launching a new publication. The CFZ British Big Cat Report 2004 - an entire book chronicling the big cat sightings from the whole of the UK during last year will be available imminently. We are taking orders now, and will be going to print within days of the release of this magazine. Mark deserves a warm commendation for all his work, and we are very excited to be able to offer this new book to our readers.

Regular visitors to the CFZ website will know that about six months ago we launched a separate website for the Big Cat Study Group. [www.mysterycats.com](http://www.mysterycats.com). This includes a free monthly, downloadable newsletter in \*.pdf format. We have to admit that we are a little bit behind schedule at time of writing. This is entirely our fault rather than Mark's. Because of the pressure of work at the CFZ, are full production schedule, and sheer volume of a eyewitness report, news items, and it new members that have to be processed, we are behind schedule with a lot of things. This is probably not the right place to appeal for help, but if anybody out there fancies donating some time or expertise to lessening the load of administration would personally false upon the shoulders of the permanent directorate, we would be very grateful.

**BRITISH BIG CATS SURVEY REPORT**

**2004**

THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY  
TRUST FOR CONSERVATION AND ANIMAL WELFARE

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But Mark's run-down of 2003's big cat sightings is not the only cat related book which we're planning to release this year. Our old pal Paul Crowther - our Cornish representative, and photographic consultant has also written a book about the Beast of Bodmin. The book - *The Beast and I* - is uproariously funny, and will be released sometime this summer. Mark is also working on a book about the Lincolnshire big cats, and we shall be publishing this at some stage.

This summer, the CFZ will be taking part in a week-long investigation into big cat sightings in Hampshire. Mark, Graham, Jon, Richard, and John will be there for the entire week, and other CFZ personnel will be there for shorter periods of time. If you're interested in joining us please email Mark or Jon.

Mark needs the following information to help with his ongoing researches in Lincolnshire:

1. We would like to get in touch with Mr. Gary Bennet who took footage of a large black cat.
2. Would love to talk with the people who mailed comments to the BBCi Lincolnshire notice board.
3. Rachael Wydrynska, from Lincoln, March.
4. Christine Tye, April, Market Rasen.
5. Vic and Carol Gryniewicz from Southrey, June.
6. Mick and Joy Burns from Spilsby, June.
7. Caroline Buck of Horncastle, June.
8. Sheila Rudkin of Barnaby Beck, June.
9. Ken Hillier July.
10. Several sightings in and around the town of Lincoln during the summer, details would be very helpful, thanks.
11. Caroline Bark of Lodington Court, Horncastle, July
12. Dr Bill White, of St Andrew's Drive, Skegness, July.
13. An unidentified man finds a lair believed to belong to a big cat near Louth, July.
14. Chris Till, July, Laughton Forest, near Gainsborough.
15. Liz Castle August.
16. Jill Little of Woodhall Spa, August.

17. August & September saw five reported sightings from the Brigg area, are you one of the witnesses, can you help?

18. Rob Barnes from Langton who came face to face with a large cat on his drive way.

19. Gary and Hazel Bennett from Hagworthingham had just returned from holiday when they spotted the beast prowling behind their house, they took video footage. Please get in touch.

20. Neville Davies, Boston, found paw prints, September.

21. Muriel Brooks, Edlington, September.

22. September: Exact location not known, but a Lincolnshire family believe that a large cat may frequent a small copse near their property.

23. 14th October, a large white cat seen near Mablethorpe.

A man from Horncastle took video evidence of a large black cat seen on the outskirts of the town in early October?

In October, Chris O'Connell, of St Nicholas' Drive, Wybers Wood spotted a cat. Grimsby? More sightings around the Cromwell Road area.

Nahar Reiaf, Louth, November.

Horncastle 19th November, a couple of hours before we had our sighting footage was taken on the outskirts of the town. We would dearly love to talk with the witnesses and compare the animal we saw to the one on the footage. I believe this footage was taken in the fog, and if I remember correctly that night - being new to the area - we lost our way a little as it was fairly thick fog earlier on in the evening

Horncastle 19th November, several sightings of the cat around the town, please get in touch if you are one of the witnesses.

Apprx 17th December, a motorist contacted Scunthorpe police after sighting a 'black panther' in the Brigg area.

A member of public contacted the police to report that he had seen a "black panther" / in the Winterton and Roxby area. The man was walking on Roxby Trods at about 8.20pm when he saw the black cat.

A motorist was returning to his home in New Barnetby after completing a night shift in Peterborough when he saw two large cats.

Norman Robinson (71), of Palmer Lane, Barrow.

Kerry Brown had seen a large cat chasing ducks and geese in Duke of York Gardens, off Corporation Road in Grimsby. Exact date unknown.

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An unnamed farm labourer said he had seen the beast while transporting sprouts along Aylesby Road, near Great Coates. Is that you? Personal details will not be divulged, please get in touch.  
**11th December** Would like to make contact with the gentleman from Gainsborough who recorded what he believes was the big cat on his mobile phone in fields to the rear to his home.

## **Big Cat Witnesses 2004 / Please get in touch even if you are not listed below.**

- \* A lorry driver spotted a big cat on the A180 near the Great Coates interchange, January.
- \* Several sightings around the Great Coates and Wybers Wood area of Grimsby.
- \* Sightings around Acordis Acrylic Fibres, Moody Lane, Grimsby.
- \* Big Cat Witnesses & Info: General.
- \* Yvonne Heward has had a couple of sightings in the Lincolnshire area and once where it happened to gain access to her garage.
- \* Any big cat sightings you may have had past or present.
- \* Forward any news clippings onto us from Lincolnshire, no matter how old they are. They most certainly will be returned should you want them back.
- \* Information on the private zoo at Spilsby, when it was open, closed down etc.

**1976 Skegness:** 20th Dr Alec Jamieson, the police surgeon of Skegness, 'a large sandy coloured cat about 5 feet long, definitely a cougar'. PC Jock Gartshore also viewed it with him in the grounds of a sea-front convalescent home.

**1998 :** Terry Watson of Sudbrooke was driving through Baumber and is convinced he saw the cat some have dubbed the 'Lindsey Leopard'. Caroline Buck of Horncastle was still shaken when she contacted the News about her sighting in Wilksby, near Wood Enderby 2001.

Mr Lee Mansi While driving on the A158 near Wragby actually hit a large cat with his car. April 2001; Has anyone any information on the cattle that became so frightened that they headed out to a sandbank on the Humber Estuary nearly reaching Hull!

January 2002 and motorist Joe Frater spots a large cat near Marshchapel.

**2002:** Late May - Gedney: plastercasts of spoor identified as puma by London Zoo.  
c.20 July - Laughton Forest, nr Gainsborough: light brown, seen at 15yds.

- \* We dearly need assistance in collecting news past and present from Lincolnshire, there are many ways in which you can help, on several subjects. Hairy Jack, black dog legends and stories.
- \* Lincolnshire has a phantom white dog, any accounts would be appreciated.
- \* Strange beings.
- \* ghosts.
- \* I came across a story concerning a Mr Davies, night hags and an archeological find on a hill outside of Horncastle. Does anyone have more information on this.
- \* Werewolves (*Great account Roger Parson!.*)

Lincolnshire has had a spate of monkey sightings in the past, any information is gratefully received.

## ALSO:

- \* Wild boar.
- \* Jackals and hyenas were reported in the Grimsby area, has anyone the full details.
- \* Strange Animals on Waddington Hill, possibly a lemur.
- \* Bear-like creatures (Friskerton)
- \* Exotic birds
- \* Coati mundi, at least one was shot and another captured?
- \* Tapir that escaped from a wildlife park in 1972, was it ever recaptured?
- \* Ghost cat of Gainsborough as big as a pig.
- \* Wallsby sightings

## Books & Articles Wanted.

Book on black dogs by Ethel Rudkin, no more information.  
Rudkins article on black dogs of Lincolnshire 1938?

## Little Fishy Folklore

by Mark P Martin

Fortean Zoology's concern is not only for the large, spectacular mystery beasts haunting our planet. Cryptids leaving footprints in Himalayan Valleys and Sumatran jungles, or causing turbulent wakes in Northern lakes. There is more to it than that.

We can often find Animal mysteries close to home. Although less awe-inspiring than Orang Pendek, Morgawr and the Thylacine, they still fascinate. At the 2003 Weird Weekend Jonathan Downes mentioned his interest in such, "I like the little things as well". As a boy, in Hong Kong, he researched an out-of-place Fox, and has written a book on "the little things", *The Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry*.



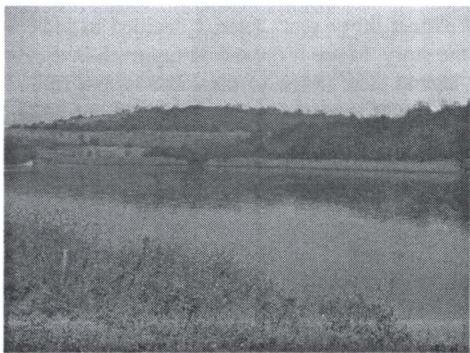
A few weeks after the 2003 WW, a childhood memory floated from my subconscious. I recalled a strange, decades old tale. When I was young, my family lived in a small South Yorkshire mining village, Treeton. On the edge of the village, at the foot of a wooded hill

lies a lake, named Treeton Dyke. These waters are the stage for our mystery. During the 1970s a story circulated our village (or at least among the younger community members), that a special fish populated the Dyke. According to the tale, the fish was a unique species of Stickleback with (never specified) features distinguishing it from other Sticklebacks. It existed only in Treeton Dyke and nowhere else. One of my playground compatriots enthusiastically reported seeing the miraculous minnow on the television news.

Now almost thirty years later, I decided to look into the story, to see if there was any truth in this mini-legend. The shape of the Lake is that of a letter C. 1000 yards long, between 150 and 250 wide. Formed artificially in 1895, by the diversion of a river (the Rother) during construction of a railway line. Could a colony of Fish, cut off, isolated, mutate into a separate, distinct species? I'm no Ichthyologist, but I thought this scenario unlikely. At least over a time span of a few decades. If the story was true, my interest in both local and natural history meant I should be aware of it. And what's more, the information would not have faded from my memory, as it appeared to have done. I began clattering my keyboard, to poke around the Internet. The search revealed exactly nothing. This confirmed my suspicions that if a unique species did live in a Yorkshire lake, it would be common knowledge. And if it did exist, why wasn't the area designated as having special scientific interest? Investigations continued with a visit to Sheffield Central Library. I trawled the Ocean of local history material, looking for the Fish... [I only had limited knowledge of how to search through the archives, so this took some time. In my final year at secondary School, my English class went to this Library to be shown "how to use it". However, I bunked off, as a Pal knew of a nearby Pub that served sixteen year olds. But, that is another story...]. Long, silent, hours spent leafing through old tomes and spinning through reels of microfiche, revealed no

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evidence Mystical Sticklebacks. I became satisfied this tiny Cryptid did not exist. But where, why and how had the Myth started? Folklorists tell us all Legends have roots somewhere. Surely this theory must also apply to our little bit of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fishy Folklore. I took a deep breath and dived back into the archives. I was about to give up. I had been in the Library most of the day and was ready for a pint. And, it was at this point, that I found the answer.



The Sorby Society was a local Natural History group. They spent years observing and cataloguing the fauna and flora of the Sheffield area. They had lovingly and clinically logged and published the fruits of their studies in a series of yearbooks. Copies of these volumes were stored in the bowels of the Library. *The Sorby Record*, volume 3, number 4, 1973 included "A Survey of the Natural History of Treeton Dyke".

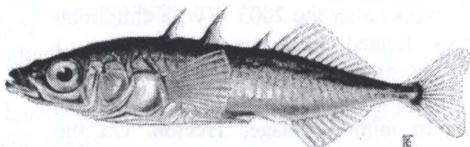
It stated, matter-of-factly, "*The water is now so polluted the only fish that survives is the Three Spined Stickleback*"

That was it. The solution. The *only* Fish in the Dyke in the early seventies (when the story began) was the humble, little Three Spined Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*). Constant retelling of the story had transformed it from "the only Fish living in the Lake" to

"the only Lake where the Fish lives". The unique characteristic it did have was its capacity to survive putrid, disgusting industrial pollution. To check my conclusion, I revisited reference materials for a third time; to cross-reference the pollution aspect. I confirmed my suspicions. In the early 1970s, Treeton Dyke and the adjacent River Rother were notorious for their massive pollution level. A newspaper article reported the Dyke was so filthy; almost all its Fish had perished. Only Sticklebacks remained. I well remember the contamination. As Kids, we joked the River Rother was so gooey, you could walk on it. The pollution came from the nearby Orgreave Coking Plant. [This name may ring a bell. In 1984, extremely violent clashes between Police and striking Miners took place here].

The good news is that today, Treeton Dyke is much-changed. I don't know exactly how (perhaps by the Sorby Society), but some time around twenty years ago, a "clean up" campaign was launched. Thankfully, it worked. The lake was restored and restocked with fish. Wildlife of all types now flourishes. The improvements are so extensive a local Angling club has secured the fishing rights. Schools use the area for nature field trips. The tiny but tenacious Three Spined Sticklebacks and the Sorby Society's fine people, led the fight back from the brink of toxic death. I salute them.

My marathon stint in the Library's guts was over. Time for some Guinness. I went to a little Pub, just round the corner; I had not been in for many years. However, I was somewhat unsure about the ambience. You see, it was full of sixteen year olds.



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## Australian Panthers.

By Dennis A. Wright.

Like many countries Australia has a history of Alien Big Cat sightings. There are three main species reported, the first and most easily explained are pumas. Puma sightings are limited to the Grampians area of Victoria and are almost certainly the descendants of a mother and cubs released by American servicemen during WW2. Prior to shipping out to Guadalcanal in 1942 the Americans, based at Ballarat, were ordered to destroy their mascot a female puma who had just had a litter of cubs. The marines were loath to jinx their coming action by destroying their mascot and so released the family into the rugged mountains in Victoria's west.

The second species reported is a striped animal, which in the north is called the Queensland Tiger Cat and in the south the Ozenkadnook Tiger (after a small town where it was first reported). This animal is reported to look somewhat like the Thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger but has also been seen to climb trees, a trait unknown in the Thylacine. Sightings of this animal are rare and it appears to occur only in isolated pockets.

The third and most often seen Alien Big Cat in Australia is usually referred to as a "panther" and this animal is reported from all areas of the country. Major hotspots of reports occur quite close to large population centres near both Melbourne and Sydney. Part of the reason for the multitude of sightings in these areas is no doubt the number of people available to see the animals. A recent spate of sightings near Sydney has resulted in the matter being raised in the New South Wales Parliament and open discussion of what dangers these large predators may pose to

residents. Officials in other states still deny the existence of large predators but unofficial investigations are being conducted by some Government Departments.

Victorian researchers receive an average of five sighting reports **every day** and when enquiries are made they find large numbers of witnesses who have never reported their experiences. It is calculated that only about ten percent of sightings are reported which means that in Victoria at least fifty people see these animals each day, three hundred and fifty sightings each week. The number of sightings alone should be enough to prompt an official investigation; there are probably no other cryptid animals in the world, which are seen as often as Australia's Panthers.

The official line is to discredit these sightings as mistaken identity claiming that the witnesses have only seen large feral cats. This does not explain why the only colour seen is black, it would be expected that if the animals seen were feral cats the full range of colours found in feral cats would be reported. Many of the witnesses who report seeing these animals are very reliable and unlikely to mistake a large feral cat for a large panther like predator. Police officers and other Government employees have reported sightings, including staff from the Parks and Wildlife service and Department of Agriculture. These are all highly trained and experienced people who are unlikely to make a mistake in the nature of the animals seen. Other very reliable witnesses have included a Veterinary employee and the manager of a wildlife park and zoo, who upon seeing the animal at night raced home to check that his own panther was still in its cage. Reports of these "panthers" began appearing soon after settlement and "panther hunts" were regularly organised by early settlers, with a surprising lack of result. No other animal, which has been hunted on such a regular basis, has so successfully eluded humans. Today clubs in

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some areas where sightings are common organise "panther hunts" as a fund raising venture. The participants pay an entrance fee and any hunter who shoots or captures a panther wins a major portion of the money paid. The venture has proved very lucrative for the clubs, as no hunter has yet claimed a prize. The only record of a panther being killed comes from the mid 1800's when a strange black animal was shot close to the small South Australian town of Tantanoola near the Victorian border.



The shots in this pic were taken from a video made in a backyard in Lithgow NS, and are used courtesy of Greg Foster. The animal in the clip was visible from 9:50AM until almost 10:20AM it just wandered around the property and the people were too afraid to go out and take a really good clip, instead they filmed it from the window. The mesh visible in the shots is the flywire screen on the window (All Australian houses have them, to keep out flies, mosquitos, spiders and some of our other less friendly marauders).

The animal was mounted on the roof of the veranda of the local hotel and proved to be a great tourist drawcard, so much so that when the body decayed and fell apart it was promptly reconstructed using dog parts. The animal was commonly referred to at the time as the Tantanoola Tiger, and reports in the

press of the day commonly identified the animal as a distinct species. In my files I have a report from the Ballarat Courier of 1895, which records that a Tantanoola Tiger was seen at Nathalia where it crossed the road in front of a local farmer. The advent of the motorcar has seen these types of sightings diminish as people travel faster and louder, many sightings today are brief glimpses at night in the headlights of the car.

One recent report from a farmer in Central Victoria provides a good concept of the size of the animal. The man and his wife had been playing cards at a neighbours house several kilometres from their own home and about half way home they were surprised to see a "panther" at the side of the road. The animal was startled by their approaching vehicle and took off, running along a track beside the road. The man slowed down to about 40 kmh and drove along beside the running animal; he could see the top of its head through the passenger window. Jokingly he said to his wife, "Reach out and grab it!" She looked at him horrified and said, "You grab it." Needless to say neither of them grabbed it.

## **The case for Thylacoleo.**

The animal shot at Tantanoola was described as a "strange animal" and even in the 1800's had the animal been a panther or large feral cat it would have been described as a cat. This evidence alone should be enough to alert everyone that we are not investigating panthers or other known species, but rather something completely different. My own sighting triggered my interest in this animal, I saw what I thought was a large panther and set out to shoot it but when I approached close enough for a good shot the animal looking back at me through the 'scope on the rifle was no cat. The face was pure marsupial; it looked somewhat like the fossa (foussa) of Madagascar and in those days I had absolutely no idea what sort of animal it could be. It was

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obviously very unusual and as I had lived all my life in the bush and never seen one before it had to be rare, so I did not shoot. I began speaking to other witnesses and to researchers and the result of my enquiries has convinced me that what I saw was a species of thylacoleonid.



This one is a watercolour, which I painted, to give an idea of the size and shape of the Thylacoleo seen by me.

Australia has only ever had one serious carnivore to equal the big cats (lions and tigers) the Thylacoleo Carnifex. Science says the Thylacoleo died out sometime in the last ten thousand years but can provide no reason why such a top predator would cease to exist. There was also, for many years, a discussion about the diet of Thylacoleo as bones had been found with marks consistent with the teeth of Thylacoleo but some of these were made "horizons after Thylacoleo" in the words of one scientist. Because the marks were made after Thylacoleo had been considered extinct it was assumed that Thylacoleo could not have made them and no thought was given to the possibility that a remnant thylacoleonid species might have survived until the present day.

There are a number of ways in which a thylacoleonid species could avoid detection while surviving until the present time. The first is that the species is nocturnal, just as possums are never seen in the forest during the day, but at night can be seen readily so too Thylacoleo does not normally venture out until dark. Secondly the animal is arboreal and spends most of its time in the trees, it is believed to attack by leaping onto its prey from several metres up a tree, which is an effective method of killing. Remaining hidden in the trees is a good method of concealment and most people are unlikely to see it. People in the Australian bush often walk under koalas without ever seeing them, on one instance I was showing some land to a prospective buyer and while walking through a patch of timber I said to him, "If you buy the land I will throw in the koala." He had not even noticed the koala browsing in the tree above us, I have noticed the same thing when taking people into the bush; none but experienced bushmen ever notice what is in the trees.

The third reason that Thylacoleo has avoided detection is also the probable reason that no recent skeletal remains have been discovered. The animal is arboreal and like the possums, to which it is distantly related, lives in large hollow gum trees. Gum trees are large enough that termites, borers, witchetty grubs and other wood eating parasites can form substantial hollows inside them. One old gum tree had a hollow so large that in the 1800's a family of six lived in the tree until they built a house. Hollows large enough for even a large animal are quite common. Living in a large hollow tree is the ideal way for an animal to avoid contact with humans and if it died in its tree the remains would not be easily found. The habit of Australia's aborigines of burning off the bush to encourage new growth would also destroy any remains in a hollow tree. The Australian bush is still subject to bushfires on a regular basis and

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recent remains no doubt continue to be destroyed.

Many city dwellers scoff at the idea that a large predator could exist without detection, but this shows a total lack of understanding of just how dense the bush is and how large the wilderness areas of Australia are. Victoria is one of Australia's smallest states and one of its most densely populated, but just a couple of years ago a circus elephant escaped into the bush near Maryborough in central Victoria. It took about two weeks to find it, if it takes two weeks to find a tame elephant how much more difficult to find a large nocturnal predator?

There are numerous accounts of sightings by hundreds of reliable witnesses, but some of the most impressive reports come from groups, where a number of people see the same animal at the same time. Often different witnesses notice different features of the same animal; in one group one man was impressed by the size of the animal, saying that it looked like a lioness in size and body shape. Another commented about the colour, saying that it was jet black but glossy like the wing of a crow, and the third noticed the gait which he described as being more like a dog than a cat even though the animal looked exactly like a panther.

One of the most conclusive reports, however, came from a teenage boy. He was walking through a patch of timber on his father's farm when he came to a large fallen tree; he climbed up and jumped over only to find himself face to face with a "panther". The startled animal turned to him opened its mouth wide and made a "hissing" noise deep in its throat. The startled boy jumped back over the log and ran home, but the sketch he did later of the animal's teeth showed that they were definitely thylacoleonid. Instead of the rows of pointed teeth and large canines associated with

big cats the animal had two chisel like teeth in the upper front and two tusks in the lower jaw, the teeth behind these are like knife blades.

Aboriginal legends tell of an animal, which translates loosely as the "drop bear", of course as there are no bears in Australia the aborigines don't have a word for bear in their language. This animal however is reputed to drop from the trees onto its prey thus killing it. Aboriginals claim that this animal does eat people if it catches them in the bush at night, although there are no verified reports of human victims in the two hundred or so years of white settlement. There have been instances of people disappearing in the bush never to be seen again, but their fate is uncertain. One story which circulated some years ago claimed that a park ranger had seen two "panthers" eating a man but the story was hushed up, it did gain credence when a backpacker was found to be missing in the area and was never located.

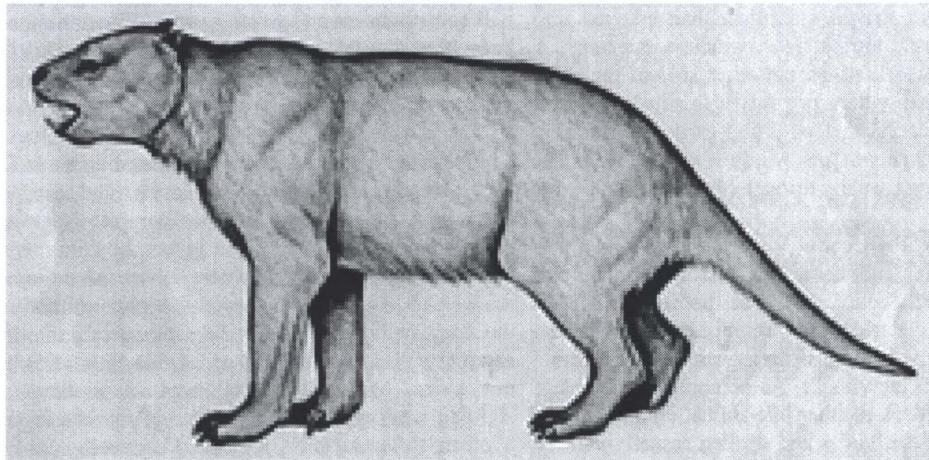
Tourists coming to Australia need have no fear of being taken by a thylacoleonid, despite having the worlds most dangerous snakes a multitude of deadly spiders and sea life the creature most responsible for tourists deaths in Australia is the crocodile. Even these can be avoided with a little common sense, crocodiles rarely have the chance to attack Australians and most victims are tourists who ignore warning signs. A few simple precautions make it possible to avoid all these dangers and enjoy a land, which abounds in unusual wildlife, large open spaces and has almost no people. The population of Australia is concentrated in a coastal strip, which runs from Melbourne to Brisbane, outside this area even just 100 Km inland there are large areas of unpopulated land.

Most people (even Australians) have difficulty understanding just how large the country is, for example in America Texas has the largest cattle ranches but Australia has cattle stations larger

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than Texas. The Australian Alps provide a winter playground of skiing and winter sports but most people are unaware that Australia has more Alps than Switzerland. Even a small state like Victoria has national parks and forests larger than the whole of England, no wonder it is so difficult finding a large nocturnal predator hiding out in the forests. The drive from Melbourne in the south to Cairns in the north (still a long way from the tip of the Eyre Peninsula) takes about 48 hours of continuous travel. Singapore is closer to Darwin in Australia's north than is Melbourne in Australia's south. Most rural Australians become used to travelling vast distances and many especially in outback areas own their own aircraft, but many others just accept travelling upwards of 100 Km to go shopping as a fact of life. Many visitors are amazed at the distances between towns or the fact that a drive to the shop can be a daylong outing.

Australia's vast size may yet prove to be a Mecca for crypto-zoologists with reported sightings of supposedly extinct species such as thylacine and Thylacoleo as well as other cryptid species such as Yowies (a Big-Foot type creature), "little hairy men" and creatures like the Wallanjoe Swamp Monster (a 1 metre tall hairy hominid with a dog like face). It is obvious that Australia's unique wildlife still has many surprises. In the past few years several new species have been identified and others thought to be extinct have been found surviving. A new species of possum was only identified in 2003 and who could forget the Woolamai Pine, a tree thought extinct for millions of years but only recently discovered thriving in a remote mountain valley. If a tree can survive undiscovered for over two hundred years no doubt many, more mobile creatures can elude detection.



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The commonly seen thylacoleonid has adapted well to the coming of white settlers and has adapted to eating prey other than native animals. Cattle, sheep, deer, poultry and feral animals, such as rabbits, have proved a boon for Thylacoleo. In my book *Thylacoleo Lives*, I pointed out that; Thylacoleo has a very distinct method of eating birds, this alerted a farmer to contact me and explain that he had lost poultry killed in this very manner. The farmer had also seen "panthers" on and near his property and so had his neighbours. Other farmers have reported seeing "panthers" eating cattle and I have examined sheep, which have obviously been eaten by animals with thylacoleonid dentition.

In addition to providing a change of diet white settlement has provided a variety of habitable sites, which the animals are now using. The owner of a property, which backs onto a forest where Thylacoleo sightings have been reported on many occasions explained that after his daughter went to a shed only 60 metres from the house she came running back to the house shouting that there was a panther in the shed. He went to investigate but by the time he arrived the animal had escaped into the bush along a creek, which runs nearby. A man who lives on the other side of the same town and whose property also adjoins a forest area reports that on rising early one morning he looked out his window to see a panther strolling casually through his backyard.

In a nearby Central Victorian town a man was dumping rubbish at the town rubbish tip and noticed a couple of old car bodies. He needed some electrical wire for his own car and so went over to see if there was any recoverable wire in the wrecks. As he approached them a large black panther like animal climbed out of one of the bodies and strolled casually into the bush, the man left without any wire. Another man who lives about 60 Km from this town

noticed some flood stacked logs in a creek bed while he was walking his dogs. The flood had stacked the logs in such a manner that there was a large hollow space underneath, thinking that it was a good place for a fox or rabbit to hide the man sooled his dogs under the logs. The dogs, a German shepherd and a terrier, approached the logs but suddenly turned tail and both ran for home leaving the man alone. Seconds later a large black "panther" emerged from beneath the logs and sauntered into the bush.

It is apparent from these experiences that the animals are utilising both natural and man made habitat, this is partly because in places such as most of Victoria, what was originally ninety percent forest is now almost ninety percent cleared for farming. The number of sufficiently large trees may not be adequate for the remaining animal population. Reports also indicate that the animals have no fear of man, they never run away but are always described as "walking into the bush". Obviously even though they appear to have no fear of man they also have no desire to associate with him. My own experiences as well as many interviews with witnesses indicate that if the animals feel that they have not been seen they will sometimes sit and watch people. When they know that they have been seen they will simply continue on their way or if disturbed will just walk away.

In my first encounter with one of these animals I was able to approach quite closely and the animal sat and watched and was completely at ease, it only disappeared when I passed behind a tree and could not watch where it went. I now realise that it probably climbed straight up into the trees overhead, but I did not search the canopy well enough because I, at that time, did not know what the animal was. A similar sighting was reported by a busload of tourists in Victoria's Grampians region. On seeing a panther like animal the bus stopped and people alighted with their cameras but could not find the

# *Animals & Men #33*

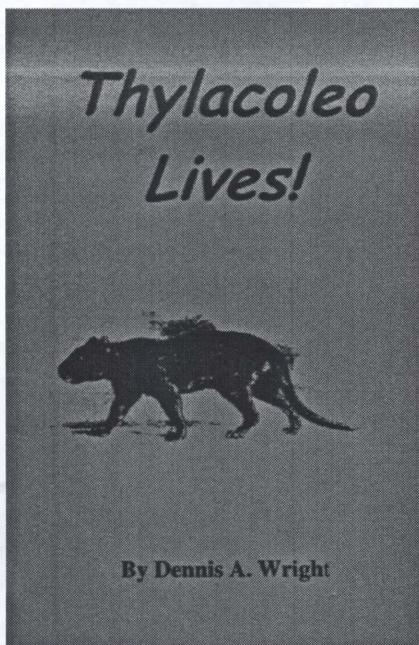
animal, until one of them saw it leaping through the treetops, already too far away for a good photograph.

Most good sightings are made by people who work in the bush and usually occur at first light or just after sunrise, the animals have apparently finished hunting and are preparing to spend the day in a suitable place. The sightings invariably occur near water such as a river, lake or spring fed dam, indicating that the animal does not travel far in the daylight to reach water. Daytime sightings usually occur when the animal has been disturbed from its chosen resting place, although sometimes these sightings are made a long way from obvious habitat areas. Unfortunately most people who see the animals are afraid to approach close enough to take a good photograph so the few photographs and films made of these animals have been taken at a distance and do not provide conclusive proof. The photographs do however show that there is a large panther like animal prowling the Australian bush.

The animals appear non-aggressive to humans, most animals that attack humans do so as part of a fear induced fight or flight syndrome generated by a surge of adrenaline at the approach of a human, Thylacoleo shows no such concern. It is usually the humans who become afraid at the sight of Thylacoleo. The animal shows one other amazing attribute, when a person stares at the back of another persons head that person will "feel" the presence and turn around. This does not happen with most animals I have sat and watched kangaroos, koalas as well as many feral and domestic animals, none of which had any idea that they were being watched, but myself and other witnesses have noticed that Thylacoleo senses when a human is watching. Witnesses have also reported the feeling of

"someone" watching only to look around and see Thylacoleo watching them from a safe distance.

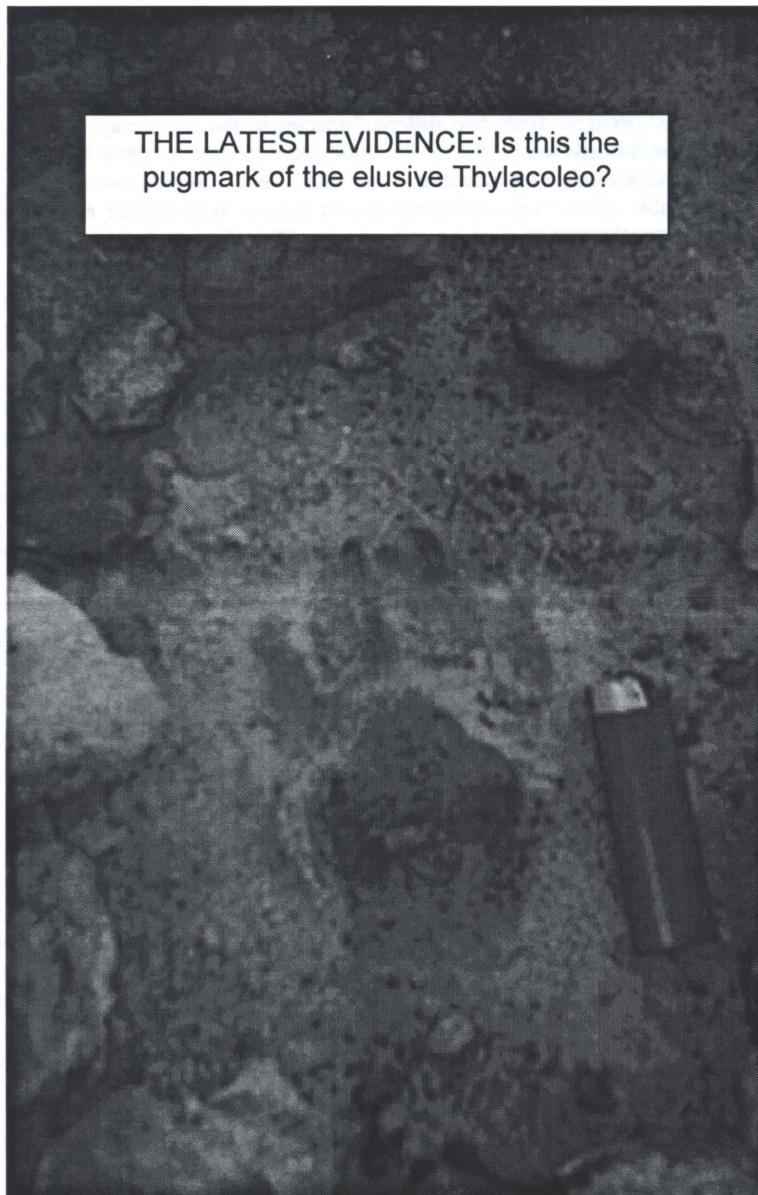
Science is unable to explain how this sense works in humans and until this is resolved we will not understand how the sense could affect two different species in the same way. Even if the sense could be expected to work between creatures of the same species we would ordinarily expect species with similar reactions to be at least somewhat alike. Is it possible that Thylacoleo has a brain function similar to humans? Could a large marsupial carnivore evolve to be intelligent enough to hide from the only species that might be a danger to it? These questions will no doubt be answered when a Thylacoleo is captured or another one becomes as careless as the one at Tantanoola one hundred and fifty years ago, and reveals itself to a man with a gun.



available from [www.thylacoleo.com](http://www.thylacoleo.com)

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THE LATEST EVIDENCE: Is this the  
pugmark of the elusive Thylacoleo?



# *Animals & Men #33*

## **Yes, red wolves still exist in Texas**

By Chester Moore, Jr.

They say the eyes are the window to a human's soul. If this is true for animals, last winter I gazed into the essence of a truly wild, shy, intelligent creature.

Standing in the middle of a trail in a set of woods in Jefferson County, Texas was a beautiful, red and black-colored wolf and for a moment, our eyes met.

The animal did not seem frightened but instead curious as to what a human was doing in its territory. It looked me over, curiously cocked its head and walked into the nearby brush.

I was exhilarated.

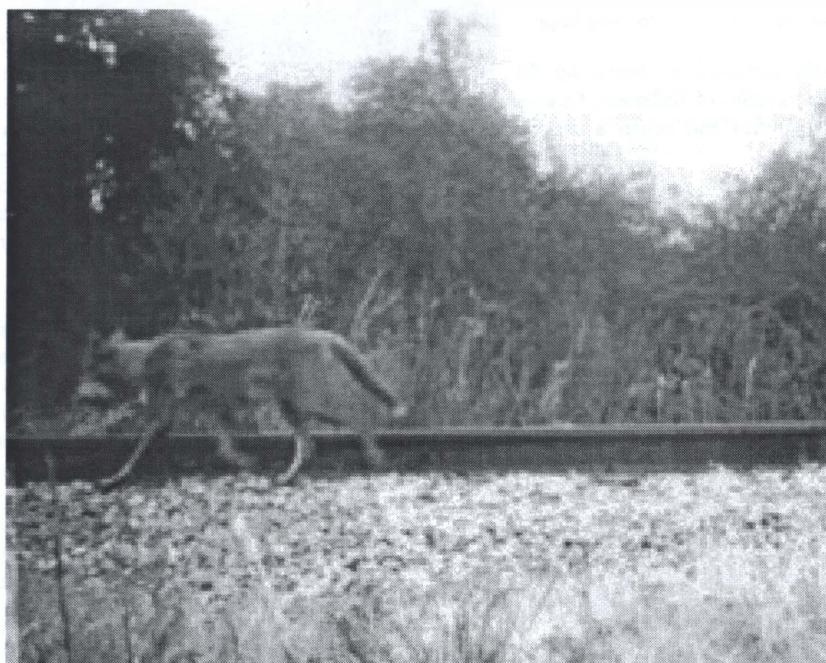
Being within 30 yards of a wolf during daylight hours is something very few people get to experience.

Secondly, I had a motion-sensing camera set up on the very trail the wolf walked. I had received reports of these animals in the area on a consistent basis over the years and decided to see if I could get photographic verification.

Wolves are not supposed to exist in Southeast Texas. In 1980, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) scientists declared the red wolf (our indigenous wolf species) extinct in the wild.

The once proud-denizens of the coastal prairie and pine forests of East Texas had fallen to a variety of environmental factors, including hybridizing with coyotes and domestic dogs.

However, not all was lost for the species.



# *Animals & Men #33*



Chester Moore with one of his camera traps

USFWS officials managed to round up 14 wolves from the marshes of Jefferson, Orange and Chambers counties and began a captive breeding program.

USFWS officials stocked descendants of these animals in North Carolina, Tennessee and Florida, but there are no wolves left in Texas according to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists.

I disagree.

Over the years, I have collected hundreds of reports of wolves in Southeast Texas and have seen a few of them myself. Unfortunately, when sharing their experiences with TPWD officials people are told the animals they are seeing are coyotes.

Some of them might very well be since coyotes are extremely abundant in the area, but I know animals as well as anyone and can attest the ones I am questioning are not coyotes. I believe this is the case with many of the reports I have ~~have~~ as well.

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Since November 2002, I have spent a great amount of time gathering evidence of wolves in the area. I have cast numerous tracks in plaster and took photographs of six different wolves in Orange and Jefferson County with motion-sensing cameras.

USFWS scientists describe a mature red wolf as standing 26 inches at the shoulder, having a deep reddish-brown coat, a thin, long tail with a white tip, white on the inside of long, lanky legs and under the mouth, large ears and a wide head.



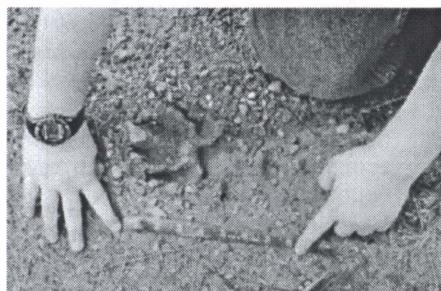
Chester Moore holds two four-inch wolf tracks found in Orange County, Texas.

That is exactly the animal I photographed with a Moultrie motion-sensing camera in Orange County walking down a railroad track. Its tracks were 3 1/2 inches long and that fits within the red wolf description as well.

# *Animals & Men #33*

The next night I got two more of the animals on film, which seems to be using the tracks as a travel route.

In Jefferson County, I have located an area with big wolves. The one I saw was every bit as large as my German shepherd who weighs right at 80 pounds and many of the tracks are four inches long. That is bigger than my dog's tracks.



Sharing information is one of the best ways to forward the cause of cryptozoology and conservation. Arkansas Bigfoot creature researcher Lisa Chandler found these six inch wolf tracks in Arkansas, prompting a possible Team Cryptokeeper Gray Wolf project there.

I have photographed three wolves there, one that looks like a typical red wolf while the others look like gray wolves.

This is interesting because Texas has a native population of gray wolves that is also supposed to be extinct. The animals I photographed are most likely red wolf descendants of some sort. Most red wolves as the name implies are red-colored but they also can be black, gray and varying shades in between giving a gray wolf-like appearance.

My latest success of the wolf front was capturing a red wolf eating at a bait site I had set up for five minutes. The animal is standing only 30 feet away from my motion-sensing

video camera and if it is a coyote, I am a parakeet.

An interesting sidenote is that the state of Texas lists the red and gray wolf as endangered in Texas, not extinct.

The carrier pigeon and Mexican grizzly are not on that list and neither is the wooly mammoth if you catch my drift. These animals may not

be 100 percent what scientists consider a red wolf to be. I have not done a genetic test, but I do know these animals are not coyotes and they are not dogs.



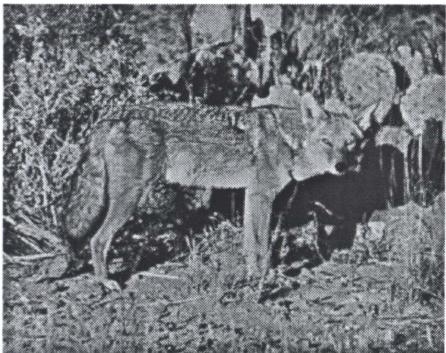
A close up of one of the Red Wolf pictures from the camera trap

Actually, they may be as much a wolf as the "pure" ones in the captive breeding program.

I recently came across this excerpt on a Web site dedicated to red wolves.

"In June of 1992 two scientists, R. K. Wayne and S. M. Jenks, published their findings on the genetic composition of the Red wolf in Nature, a British scientific journal. By doing so, they put the survival of the animal in question."

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This is a coyote. Note the bushy tail, small stature, short legs and size of head. This is a completely different animal than the wolves Team Cryptkeeper have photographed.

*"Their findings indicated that the Red wolf might in fact be a hybrid, a cross between Gray wolf and coyote. Their examination of DNA of captive red wolves and from skins of museum specimens captured at the turn of the century has been questioned."*

That petition was denied, but controversy remains over the true genetic identity of the red wolves. For science, these issues are important but for those of us who enjoy nature slight genetic details are not so important.

The way I see it is there are animals in Southeast Texas that look like wolves, howl like wolves and behave like wolves.

In other words, they are wolves.

If you see a long-legged, red-colored animal the size of a German shepherd cross the road in Texas don't think you're crazy for thinking it's a wolf. Let the scientists sweat the small and consider yourself lucky for getting a look at one of God's most beautiful creatures.

- To educate landowners and the public how to properly distinguish wolves from coyotes.

I have nothing against livestock owners killing coyotes that take their stock, but wolves are not doing enough damage to warrant shooting. The ones I have talked with so far are very cooperative and several have passed on shooting wolves because they know they are not the typical, extremely common coyote. Again, education is the key.

- Dispell the myth that wolves do not exist. Whether they are 100 percent wolf or have 10 percent coyote blood they are wolves and they have slightly different roles in nature and have their own unique conservation problems.

If you are interested in helping with Project Wolf Howl, e-mail [cryptkeeper13@yahoo.com](mailto:cryptkeeper13@yahoo.com) or mail:

13 Productions,  
101 Broad St.  
Orange, TX  
77630.  
United States

For more information, go to:

[www.cryptkeeper.com](http://www.cryptkeeper.com).

# *Animals & Men #33*

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Big Bird sightings in the southern parts of the United States have been of great interest to those of us at CFZ Mansions for many years. They are so rare that we have never really covered them. In one of those ironies of which forteans are so very aware, we received two big bird reports within days of each other.....

## *Big Bird*

Report from Houston, Texas

On Thursday, the 09<sup>th</sup> of October 2003, I interviewed Richard Guzman of southeast Houston, regarding an unidentified flying animal that he observed along with a friend in the early nineteen eighties.

The event came to light after Mr. Guzman overheard an associate of mine discussing Bigfoot at a job sight they were working together. According to my associate, Mr. Guzman came forward with the account after some apprehension, and explained that he had been ridiculed in the past whenever he had brought the subject up. After my interview with Mr. Guzman, I was convinced by his sincerity and also the consistency of his story as I grilled him with questions. Here is the sighting as best he can remember.

At the time, Richard was in his early twenties and was living at his family's house at 10005

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Lucore Street, off Allen Genoa and 225, between Pasadena and Houston. He believes that it was 1983, but it might have been a year or two earlier. He also thinks that it was summer, based on the green foliage and warm weather. He and his longtime friend Rudy were outside, leaning on Richard's Chrysler at around 6:00pm. It was still daylight with clear skies. Suddenly, they both caught sight of a creature that was flying about fifty feet off, but parallel to the ground in a more or less straight line about forty yards away.

They both watched it for about fifteen seconds until it disappeared into some tall trees to the southeast of their location. According to my original contact, Guzman at first described the thing as a "leathery bird" and "one of those pterodactyls on *The Flintstones* (cartoon show)." He later told me that it reminded him of *Rodan* from the Japanese monster movies.

His description is as follows – "What got me at first was the head and tail," he explains. In three separate illustrations that I had him draw, he portrays a short pointy beak, as well as a backwards curving hump on the top of its head. His clearest memory is of the long snake-like tail that terminated in what resembles an arrowhead or diamond shape. He insists that the tail remained horizontal or straight behind the body as it flew, dragging behind. Richard estimates that the animal's total length was about five feet with two feet of that being tail and that its wingspan was about five feet. He describes it as being completely without feathers and says that its color was a golden tan, brown, or beige like leather. He describes the wings as looking like bat wings, and notes that the creature mostly glided, only flapping them a couple of times slowly. He also distinctly remembers some sort of vertical indentation in the side of its head. He cannot recall whether or not he saw any legs hanging down or dragging behind.

After the sighting, both men were startled and began to slowly question each other in order to confirm what they both had seen.

Rudy's life has subsequently taken a turn for the worse and he is currently incarcerated in the Houston city jail. But Richard insists that Rudy will back up his testimony 100%, if and when I can interview him separately. As mentioned earlier, Guzman has only discussed this incident a few times and has felt ridiculed. Furthermore, he has no knowledge of cryptozoology or paleontology and has never been able to figure out exactly what he saw that day. He also seemed totally unaware that modern sightings of pterosaurs have been reported by other people in Texas. It is interesting to note the well-documented case of Harlingen ambulance driver James Thompson, who claimed to have seen an almost identical animal less than three hundred miles away around the same time period.

According to Dr. Karl Shuker, the long tail is indicative of the small pterosaurs known as rhamphorhynchoids. As far as we know, these early pterosaurs of the Jurassic period did not possess the distinctive head crest of the later and larger pterodactyls. Based on his description, the closest match to the Guzman sighting might possibly be *Campylognathoides zitteli*, or possibly the smaller snub beaked *Scaphognathus* rather than the long beaked *Rhamphorhynchus*. I should also like to note that the distinctive tail is reminiscent of the Mexican snake god Quetzacoatl, the Piasa of Illinois, and the Jersey Devil. Worldwide, it brings to mind the Kongamato of Africa, as well as the Ropen of New Guinea. *Ken Gerhard*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following reports were sent in to us via our online sightings report form on the CFZ website. The first – from Phoenix, Arizona appears to be of a similar creature as that described in Ken's piece which is printed above.

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"Me and my brother witnessed from our backyard some sort of huge bird I think.

When it came over us it was about 75-80 ft above us but it was still huge it has been awhile since it happened but I remember telling my brother that it must be as big as a personal plane. I also remember seeing wings but I dont remember seeing them flapping which is really weird.

It was just a weird experience and we both witnessed it on two consecutive nights the first night it flew over us north to south and the second night south to north. I still to this day go outside at night and look up for it.

Whatever it was it was huge dark black and seemed to move at a slow pace for not flapping its wings. Also I don't recall seeing feather like texture on it but it was dark outside so it might of been hard to see small details. Feel free to contact me with any questions."

The second report comes from Silver Creek, Nebraska:

"I saw in the wild country; this strange flying mammal. My hair stood up. I knew it shouldn't be alive. It shouldn't be able to fly. It wasn't built right. I saw it 3 times in a week. As close as about 12 feet away. It flew next to my car for about 5 seconds. The area was forested. The woods were about 30 years old.

The first time it was seen from the rear. Its body was about 2 feet wide and 2 feet long. It had a 2 foot tail also. The tail had a hand sized anvil on it; the size of a human fist. The tail was completely round. It flew like a stingray swims. Very mobile. It had large fox like ears. I saw no feathers or fur. It had a very pushed in bat like face.

I was thinking it might have been a bat. Most bats don't have tails. There is a bat species that lives round here that is large; but no tail. There are free-tailed bats also. But NO Animal I can find has an anvil tail."

## FEATHERS VERSUS SCALES

The Thunderbird is a creature from American Indian lore. A bird so vast that it's beating wings made a sound like thunder. Its remarkably similar to the Arabic Roc made famous by the Sinbad stories. The Thunderbird - for some reason - was the sworn foe of the killer whale in the legends of coastal tribes. It's visage graces many a totem-pole.

Modern-day sightings fall into two catagories: The first are outsized feathered birds much like the traditional description of The Thunderbird. The second type is reptillian, with leathery wings and a toothy beak. The latter kind comes in both large and small varieties. The reptillian kind have more in common with dragons than they do with the Native American Thunderbird.

Oftern described as "*perodactyls*" the reptillian kind are reported mainly (but not exclusivly) from the southern states. Their wings are described as "bat-like". True pterosaurs had a wing structure radically different from that of bats.

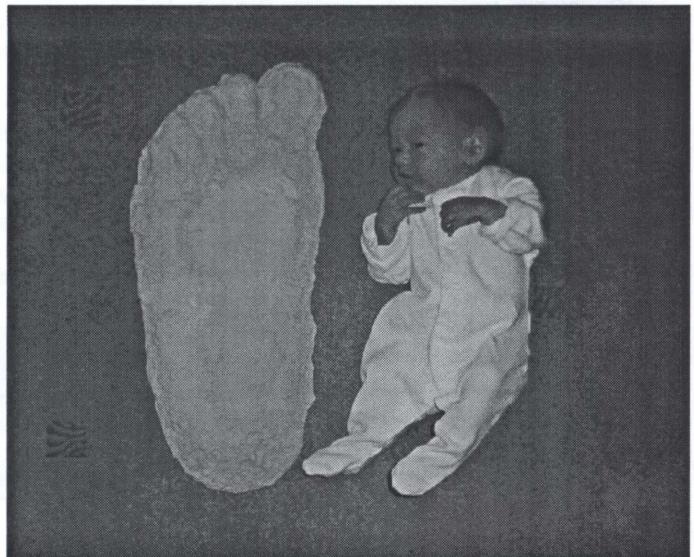
Bat's wings are made from four extended fingers covered in skin. Pterosaurs had one elongated finger and the skin wing was supported by cartalige struts. Similar reports of the leathery winged creatures come from Africa and New-Guinea. RF

# *Animals & Men #33*



Proof that occasionally someone in the CFZ has SUCCESS with women! Congratulations to Andy Billing, one time CFZ Computer bod, now resident in Canada with his lovely wife Adrienne. And what'smore when you come back to Exeter this summer its HIS round!

CFZ Regional representative Paul Vella is determined that he is founding a cryptozoological dynasty. Here baby Kieran is only a few days old and Paul is already eliciting his opinion on some of the more thorny of the Bluff Creek plaster casts! However, rumours that at his first birthday party, Kieran will be expected to "Pin the tail on Gigantopithecus" are somewhat exaggerated.



# *Animals & Men #33*



The CFZ is more than just a cryptozoological research organisation – it is becoming a truly global community of people who share each other's joys, triumphs, tragedies and successes. Long may it remain so.

Charity Redfern 1995 - 2003

It is with much sadness that we have to report our beloved pet Shar-Pei dog, Charity, died suddenly on December 10 at 3:00 p.m. at the age of eight after what was thankfully a brief illness. Needless to say this was a terribly upsetting shock.

She was a lovely dog, kind and had a unique and comic personality. Jon got to meet her when he visited us just three weeks before she passed away and she spent a lot of time digging through his suitcase. Why? We're not sure, but she seemed to enjoy herself immensely! To us, as life-long dog lovers, she was the best dog in the world and we will never forget her.

Thanks to everyone that wrote to us after her death; it meant a great deal and we thank you all.

Nick & Dana Redfern.

# *Animals & Men #33*



We had a big forward planning meeting for the year on the 7th and 8 of January. Various members of the permanent directorate of the CFZ converged upon a house and we thrashed out what we were planning to do this year. We were due to make an announcement about a week later, but a succession of problems - some of them large, and some of them small - came up, and we had to change our plans. Mark Martin, who is not only a valued friend, but has been an integral, and senior member of the CFZ field team for the past year has had to resign from the CFZ, YUFOS, and other Fortean research organisations to which he was a member due to personal problems. As he was integrally involved in many of the plans for the year it has caused us to have to rethink.

## 2004 Expeditions.

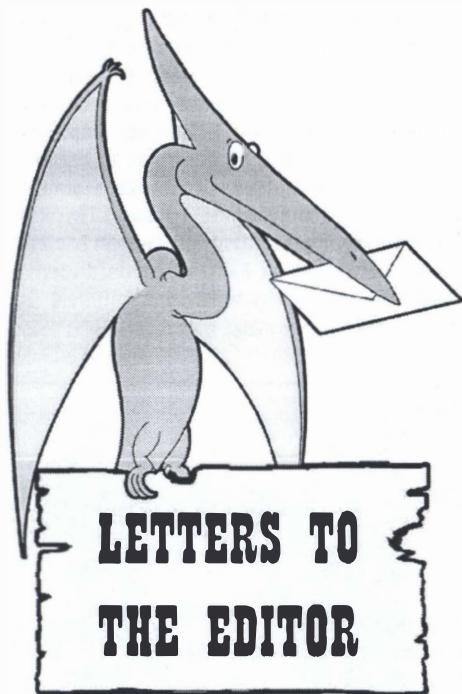
Some months ago we announced that we were planning an expedition to Mongolia in search of the Deathworm. Sadly, we cannot afford to do this project during 2004, but we hope to be in a financial situation to carry out this expedition next year. It has been announced in various quarters that we are going to Greece in February. Sadly - due to the vagaries of travel agents - this expedition too has had to be cancelled. Also cancelled is a planned trip to Switzerland in August. Our good friend and colleague Georges Massey has carried out a feasibility study on a trip in search of the tatzelwurm, but as we have not been able to find any verified sightings more recently than the early 1950s we have decided that it would be a waste of time and resources.

Together with Richard Freeman and (we hope) John Fuller, I shall be travelling back to Texas in June to appear at Chester Moore's cryptozoology conference. We hope to liaise with at Chester and other Texas cryptozoologists during our stay, and have several pieces of fieldwork we intend to carry out.

We shall be returning to Sumatra in the late spring or early summer. We originally planned to go for the first three weeks in May but have been informed by Debbie Martyr that this coincides with the local elections, which may not be the most apposite time to visit Indonesia. We shall, however, be going sometime between May and the beginning of August. The expedition - again led by Dr Chris Clarke, and again including Richard Freeman and Jon Hare will be attempting to visit to the Lost Valley in Kerinci national park. A location which - allegedly at least - not been explored, by Europeans at least. It is allegedly one of the places where the Orang-Pendek is most likely to be found. The expedition will last about three weeks, and if there are any CFZ members who are interested in applying to join, will they please contact me as soon as possible. It goes without saying, that preference will be given to applicants who have specific skills that the rest of the expedition do not have.

Whilst the CFZ will be able to pay for some of the expedition costs in each case, applicant so a should be prepared to pay some of the expenses themselves. We sincerely hope that as the CFZ gets bigger, we shall be able to afford to pay more of the expenses ourselves.

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The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

## **VENUS IN FLARES**

Mr. Jon Downes –

I am fairly certain that your mystery turtles are specimens of *Malaclemys terrapin*, the Diamond-

back terrapin. It is native to United States' coastal estuarine waters from around Cape Cod all the way around Florida into Texas, and probably somewhat into Mexico, too. There are a number of subspecies and races. They all look rather similar, but the dots and lines on the head and neck vary a lot, as well as skin and shell coloration.

Pictures of the carapaces and plastrons would be additionally helpful, but the two head shots you provided in FT181, look very much like specimens I have seen. I am sure a quick Web search on *Malaclemys terrapin* will provide you with sufficient information to confirm or deny my identification.

If they are Diamondback terrapins there are two things that can be said:

1) They need brackish water to remain healthy. I presume you have not been keeping them in brackish water, which probably accounts for their occasionally turning pinkish. They are being captively bred by herpetologists and hobbyists. Captive offspring are better able to tolerate living exclusively in freshwater.

2) They are reportedly pretty damn good eating. They were nearly eaten to extinction in the 1800's to early 1900's. Turtle soup has been out of vogue in the American diet for decades now, so their wild population has come back substantially, although they will probably never reach their original numbers. I have been a vegetarian for several all my adult life, so I have never eaten one myself, so I cannot confirm their delectability. In my childhood, I did have snapping turtle soup, *Chelydra serpentina*, on one occasion, and I can report that it does not, oddly enough, taste like chicken. Actually, it was rather rubbery and vaguely fishy, with beef undertones. How this may compare with *Malaclemys terrapin*, I obviously cannot say.

I hope this helps.  
Regards,  
Dean Cooper

# *Animals & Men #33*

## GOD GAVE US LIFE

Dear Jon,

Several years ago in Oxford's Radcliffe Science Library I came across a reference to a British tortoise and I thought you might be interested in the information.

In the issue of *Country-side* dated July 21st 1906 there is a reference to the acclimatization of the River tortoise in the Thames valley and elsewhere in England. It was carnivorous with a dark shell with bright yellow dots.

Somewhere in my files I have more substantial records of "British" tortoise but I have not been able to trace my reports.

All the best.

Richard Muirhead

## I HATE NERYS HUGHES

Dear Jon,

The bear has ever been the symbol of Russia, but Montague Summers, in his book *The Werewolf* (1933) has unearthed a Russian bear of a somewhat different kind.

He informs us that amongst the tribesfolk of Siberia there was a legend, which he feels may have had some support from the Soviet propaganda machine, about a bear and goes on to regale us with it.

It seems there was once a bear of imposing mien which lumbered his way through the Russian forests. A general wished to capture it and set about it in a typically Russian fashion. He had a large vat filled with vodka left out in

the woodlands and the bear, finding it to his liking, quaffed the lot. Soon after he fell into a drunken snooze and was captured. He was then sold on and became the property of a travelling showman - a dancing bear. However, captivity was not to his taste and he contrived to escape. Some time afterwards, he went through a strange transition - he changed into a man. He was doubtless surprised, but fitted into human society quite well. He took the name of Lenin, became the leader of the Bolsheviks and...the rest is history.

Ronan Coghlan.  
Co. Down

## THE TRUMPTON RIOTS

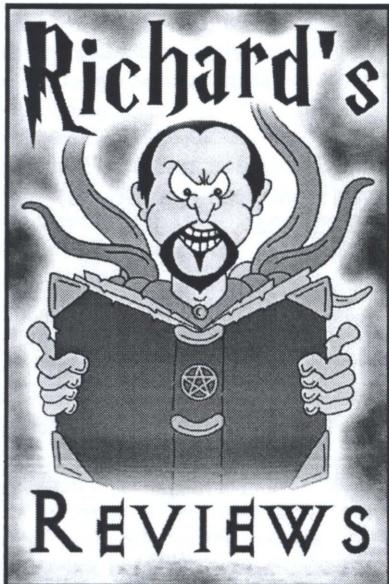
Jon.

I thought you might also be interested in this picture taken by my wife of what appears to be a wall lizard taken at her house in July 2003. She lives in a remote cottage near Longnor in the Peak District. This would appear to be too north and cold for a naturalised breeding population so it is a mystery as to how it got there.

Roy Nash



# Animals & Men #33



*The Book of Eels: On the Trail of the Thin-heads* by Tom Fort  
HarperCollins; ISBN: 0007115938

Wow. Once in a blue moon one receives a book which is a glorious tribute to someone's obsession. This is such a book. I am very fond of eels, both as living creatures and as a gustatory delicacy. However, Mr Fort is clearly completely obsessed with the wriggly little chaps. Beginning life in the Sargasso Sea, the eel travels across the ocean, lives for twenty or so years, and then is driven by some instinct back across the ocean to spawn and die. And the next generation starts the story again. Eels were being caught and consumed 5000 years before the birth of Christ - Aristotle and Pliny wrote about them; Romans regarded them as a peerless delicacy; Egyptians accorded them semi-sacred status; English kings died of overeating them. There are many strange practices among eel fishers

all over the world, and many great fortunes based upon the eel harvest. This book, is a remarkable combination of social comment, biography and natural history. But - like all the best books written by and about obsessives - it is also the story of Fort's personal journey to the heart of his own anguilliform obsession, and lovely accounts of all the eccentric and unusual people he meets along the way. I would personally recommend this book, not only because it will tell you (in the words of a long forgotten marital aid manual), all you ever wanted to know about eels but were embarrassed to ask, but because it is a damn good read. I'm so impressed I'm off to find some of Mr Fort's other books to see if they enthuse me to the same extent.

*Mystery sea-serpents of the Southwest*  
by Chris Moiser. ISBN 1-899383-68-9  
(Bossiney Books)

It is always awkward when a friend of yours writes a book. I remember some years ago when I was a music journalist, a very famous band - who happened to be friends of mine - released a long awaited new album. What was worse, was that my ex-wife and I were mentioned on the sleeve notes. They sent me a copy to review..... and it was bloody awful. I couldn't ever look them in the eye again. I made myself a promise on that day that I would never ever put myself in that position again, and find that I had to review a piece of product by a person whom I held in any sort of regard. However, rules are made to be broken. Chris Moiser is an old friend of mine - a fine Zoologist and a very good writer, and this book is excellent. It takes a refreshing new look at the phenomenon of giant marine creatures, and draws some interesting new conclusions. More importantly, however, it is the first in-depth look at the Mystery marine animals were short of the seas off the south-western peninsula of the British Isles. It is always a good sign when - as someone who's been working as a professional

# *Animals & Men #33*

cryptozoologist for nigh-on 15 years - I find information which is totally new to me. And when that information concerns the area of the country where I happen to live, but there is an even better sign. This is an excellent little book and not only provides a sinking concise introduction to the subject for the newbie, but is a welcome addition it to the canon of literature on the subject of sea-serpents around of the world. Well done Chris.

As an exclusive offer to readers of this magazine, if you would like to purchase a copy straight from the author he will autograph it together with the dedication of your choice. Please send cheques for £3.65 payable to C M

Moiser at 18a Pasley Street, Stoke,  
PLYMOUTH, PL2 1DP

(*No personal callers, by post only please*)

*Wild Boar in Britain* Martin Goulding  
Whittet Books ISBN 1 873580 58 4

One of the most exciting developments in British natural history in recent years has been the return of the wild boar after over three hundred years of extinction. After its demise due to over hunting and habitat loss in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is now back with a vengeance. The fad for wild boar meat in the 1980s led to this magnificent beast's return. The great storms of 1987 led to the escape of many boar in Dorset, Kent, and Sussex. Having bred and being added to by subsequent escapes they now number in their hundreds and exist in several different colonies. This is a long overdue study on these beasts in the UK. It includes a look at their biology, how and when they returned to our shores, their cultural influence, the social and ecological implications of their return and most importantly (I think) the field craft needed to track them down and observe them in the wild. The book tells you all you could need to know in an accessible manner that is easy to read and full of real enthusiasm. There

are helpful diagrams and lovely black and white photographs. A smashing celebration of the welcome return of a charismatic animal.

*Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the west* Eric Baratay and Elisabeth Hardouuin-Fugie (Reaktion Books)  
ISBN 1 86189 208 X £19.95

The first zoological collections may have been in ancient Sumeria and Babylonia. Other ancient collections have been recorded in China 4000 years ago. The west really lagged behind. One cannot count the collections amassed for the gladiatorial arenas in Imperial Rome as zoological collections in the true sense. This book charts the west's growing interest in natural history from 1500 onwards. It looks at the recording of animals in art (showing some exquisite and seldom seen paintings) and stuffed collections in cabinets of curiosity and later in museums. The travelling menageries of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are covered as are the strange animal auctions held by animal dealers up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

All the great zoos of the west and their histories are covered. London, Rotterdam, Basel and so on was well as more poorly known collections such as Rome zoo. The great animal collectors such as the Hagenbecks also feature. The photography is stunning and provides a peerless historic account. On remarkable shot features "Mamlyuk" a bull Asian elephant at Moscow zoo who has the most fantastically long tusks. There are a few errors. Crocodiles are labeled alligators a couple of times and a whale skeleton at Barcelona zoo is called a dinosaur skeleton. These may have arose as mistranslations from the original German text.

The only other books like this one have been Clinton Keeling's privately published books on the history of British zoos. An excellent read.

# *Animals & Men #33*

## MAGAZINE LISTINGS

*We welcome an exchange with publications who cover similar interest areas to our own. Please write to the individual publications for details of subscription rates etc.*

*Texas Bigfoot Research Center*  
P. O. Box 191711,  
Dallas,  
TX 75219

*Pennsylvania Bigfoot Society,*  
26 Cardinal Drive,  
Jeannette PA 15644,

*Steamshovel Press,*  
POB 210553, St Louis,  
MO 63121 United States

*(Excellent Conspiracy Theory journal)*

*BC Scientific Cryptozoology Club,*  
#2305, 8805 Hudson St.,  
Vancouver, BC,  
Canada V6P 2M9

*Surrey Earth Mysteries,*  
25 Albert Road,  
Addlestone,Surrey

*Animal News*  
Mrs P Wells,  
8 Yewlands Walk,  
Ifield,Crawley,  
W Sussex,  
RH11 0QE

*(National Association of Private Animal  
Keepers)*

*Project Red Book*  
Yorkshire UFO Society,  
224, Bellhouse Rd,  
Firth Park, Sheffield,  
South Yorkshire,  
S5 6HT

*EYE Magazine,*  
24 Chesnut Ave,  
Queens Road,  
Hull, HU5 2RH

*(UFO magazine)*

*International Bigfoot Society*  
225 NE 30th Ave,  
Hillsboro,  
OR 97124, USA

*Fortean Times*  
Box 2409  
London  
NW5 4NP  
UK

*Porcupine!,*  
Dept of Ecology & Biodiversity,  
University of Hong Kong,  
Pokfulam Road,Hong Kong

*Journal for the Academic Study of Magic*  
Dept of Historical Studies  
University of Bristol  
13 Woodland Rd.,  
Bristol.  
BS8 1TB

*'DEAD OF NIGHT',*  
156 Bolton Road East,  
New Ferry,  
Merseyside,  
L62 4RY

*(Excellent fortean publication)*

# *Animals & Men #33*

## **WEIRD WEEKEND 2003**



Past Weird Weekends have been a disappointment. Despite having excellent speakers the turn out has always been very poor. So poor in fact we were toying with the idea of stopping them all together. 2003's convention killed that idea as it was a runaway success.

Held for the first time in the Cowick Barton Inn, a haunted pub in Exeter, the turnout was amazing. So good in fact that the speaker's room was a squeeze at times. This year's Weird Weekend was dominated by cryptozoology. Adam Davies gave a talk on his hunt for the Mongolian deathworm. Paul Vella did an exhibition on the Sasquatch. Darren Naish lectured on extinctions on island groups.

Richard spoke about his expedition to Sumatra in search of orang-pendek. To crown it all our patron Colonel John Blashford-Snell enraptured us all with his "Boy's Own" type accounts of searches for giant lizards and crocodiles in New Guinea, Almas in Mongolia, giant anacondas in Bolivia, and giant elephants in Nepal.

None crypto stuff included talks on King Arthur by Tim Mathews, thought forms by Steve Jones, ritual cannibalism by Rachel Carthy, screaming skulls by Mark North, and differences in UFOlogy on opposite sides of the Atlantic by Nigel Wright.

As the line up for Weird Weekend 2004 takes shape it promises to be even better.

# *Animals & Men #33*



John Fuller ponders the meaning of life with Jon Hexter and Richard Ingram



Nigel Wright and Paul Vella discuss Bigfoot



Darren Naish queues for his own lecture



Mark Martin cocks up the raffle tickets



The queue for the lecture room reaches mythic proportions



Richard is eating (again); Nichola holds court

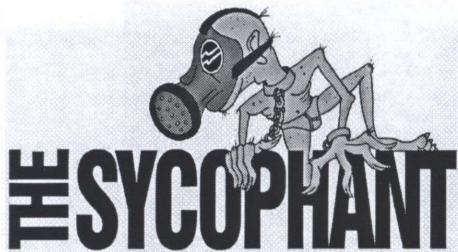


Between lectures everyone made for the bar



This year we have a bigger lecture room...

# *Animals & Men* #33



Deep in a cave beneath Loch Ness lives a strange figure who steals ideas from other magazines and then somehow makes them his own.

He keeps a jaundiced weather eye on the world of Fortean Zoology and occasionally emerges into the world of men to pour ridicule upon his unsuspecting victims...

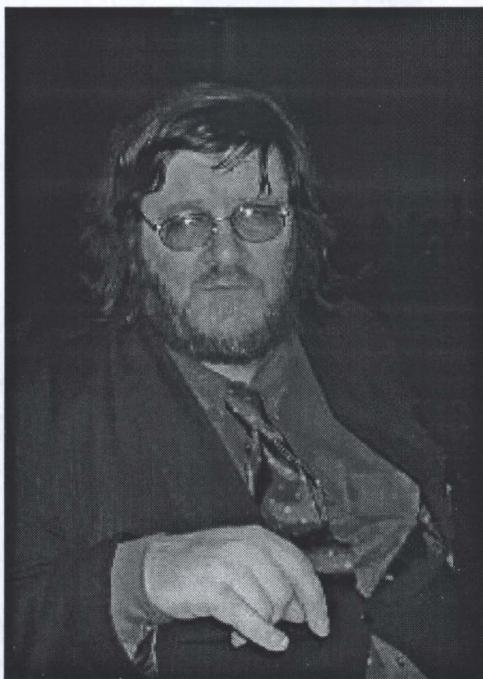


## PUKKA PARENTING

First we had Michael Jackson dangling his baby out of a hotel window somewhere in Eastern Europe. Then we had Steve Irwin dangling his baby in front of a pit full of saltwater crocodiles, but we believe that this

takes the biscuit. What fiend would allow his baby to be held by such an inhuman monster as a magazine editor who has already consumed large amounts of malt whisky? Congratulations to Simon and Debbie Wolstencroft on their new grandson, (although I have seen newts who look considerably less the worse for wear than good ol' Si in this piccie)...

## DO THE STRANDSKI



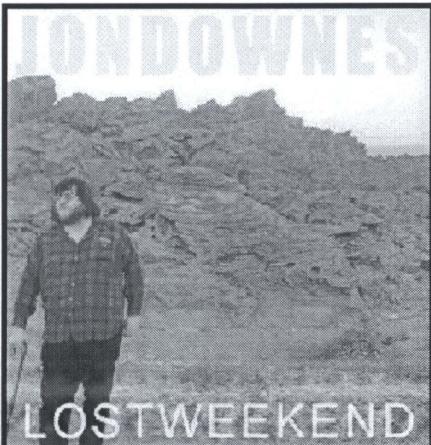
Spotted in Las Vegas a few months ago was the editor of a well known cryptozoological magazine, apparently doing his best to look like Brian Ferry. This new lounge lizard look must have been impressive because we overheard a conversation between this sleazy looking fellow and an executive for a well known American cable TV network.

# *Animals & Men #33*

Jon's antipathy towards 'reality television' is well known, but apparently the aforesaid TV executive didn't know this because he was heard broaching the idea of a CFZ reality tv show to out (mildly inebriated editor). It was suggested that some sort of a cryptozoologically tinged dating game-show might be appropriate whereupon Exwick's Mr Congeniality was heard to suggest a programme whereby all the potential suitoresses for his and Richard's hands would have to fight each other to the death with meat hooks before the survivor was tested on her housekeeping and culinary skills. The poor TV exec made his excuses and left as out hero and his cronies returned to the far more important matters in hand - ie Margeritas at \$1.50 a glass.

## JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK IN THE RECORD SHOP

Readers still shellshocked by the appearance of our beloved editor who got his musical ensemble - *Jon Downes and the Amphibians from Outer Space* - out of retirement at 2002's Weird Weekend, will be horrified to hear that his first full length cd of new songs will be in the shops imminently. It contains ten self penned songs, lasts for over an hour and is unlikely to be available in any major High Street outlets. It is available to CFZ folk for £10/\$US18 inclusive of post and packing, and probably sounds just about what you were expecting it to sound like. It is highly unlikely that the subject matter or lyrical content will allow it to be played much on the radio, but at least two songs; *The Astrology Song* and *I got dem Ol' Roswell Blues again Mama* will be of interest to forteans and devotees of outsider art-rock alike.



## The 2003 CFZ AWARDS

The *Weird Weekend* saw the launch of a prestigious Fortean honours system. The first five awards were presented to:

### 1. JOHN HARE

For services beyond the call of duty whilst sharing a room with Richard in Sumatra

### 2. DAVE BAKER

For fighting a gallant rear-guard action in keeping Keelian UFOlogy alive in the UK in the face of increasingly difficult odds.

### 3. SIMON WOLSTENCROFT

For funding the CFZ, by commissioning Richard ad Jon to write increasingly bizarre children's stories for a well known news-stand magazine

### 4. NIGEL WRIGHT

Essentially for being Nige - and looking after Jon, Richard and Graham for the last seven weird years

### 5. MARK MARTIN

For gallantry under fire

THE



CRYPTOZOOLOGY FILES  
BY MARK NORTH

VIEW HALLOO...  
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF  
THAT BALLY FOX, I MUST BAG  
THIS ONE FOR THE CLUB. WHAT  
A SURPRISE IT WILL BE.



LOCATION: TEXAS, USA

CASE: REDISCOVERY OF RED WOLVES

IT WAS REPORTED TODAY THAT COLONEL STALWORT-RIVERS, A BRITISH TOURIST ON VACATION IN THE UNITED STATES, WAS SAVAGELY ATTACKED, BY MISTAKENLY IDENTIFYING THE RECENTLY REDISCOVERED TEXAS RED WOLF.

MARK NORTH/CFZ © 2004

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Typeset by Frunobulax

“...The suits & the hats & the tie's too wide/And too short for the scientist man  
The chemistry lady with the roll-away mind, yeah/While the monster just ate Japan “